Addressing racialised inequities in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England: A Critical Race Theory analysis

By

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Abstract

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) coaches in elite sport are underrepresented in Britain and other parts of the Western world compared to BAME athletes. Empirical research indicates that this underrepresentation is underpinned by a series of institutional barriers. This is especially the case in men’s professional football in England, where lack of access to coach education, racial biases and stereotypes in coaching workplaces, as well as networks-based approaches to coach recruitment have historically blocked the transition of BAME groups from playing to coaching.

This thesis aims to identify and examine the levels of representation and experiences of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England, and the effectiveness of the English Football League’s (EFL) voluntary and mandatory codes of coach recruitment in addressing racialised inequalities. The focus of the voluntary code is at first-team coaching operations and the focus of the mandatory code is at the youth academy level. These codes represent ‘positive action’ as outlined in the 2010 UK Equality Act and are intended to encourage a conceptual and practical shift from equality of opportunities to equality of outcomes in professional football coaching.

In the first stage of data collection, a survey was created to quantify levels of representation of BAME coaches at the youth academy level and examine the procedural implementation of the mandatory code. In a second stage of data collection semi-structure interviews were conducted both at youth academy and first-team level with BAME coaches, senior governance and coaching staff at clubs and key organisational stakeholders in football, to explore attitudes towards the mandatory and the voluntary code.

The findings showed that BAME coaches at both first-team and youth academy levels continue to experience forms of access and treatment discrimination. This was especially the case in relation to lack of access to high level coach education, racial biases and stereotypes in coaching workplaces and recruitment processes, and networks-based approaches to coach recruitment.
Both the survey and the interviews indicated a mixed procedural implementation of the codes at professional clubs. The implementation of the voluntary code at first-team level appeared largely gestural and engendered little meaningful change in increasing the levels of representation of BAME coaches. In contrast, the operationalisation of the mandatory code at youth academy level was perceived as substantive in enabling the establishment of formalised and equitable recruitment processes and improving the representation of BAME coaches.

Finally, the findings indicated that the procedural implementation and effectiveness of both codes was informed by the attitudinal approaches of key decision makers at clubs. Drawing on the work of Critical Race Theory, this thesis argues that within men’s professional football in England, most decision-making personnel exhibit an ideological adherence to ‘colour blind’ (rather than ‘colour conscious’) approaches to equality and diversity management. These were premised on liberal notions of meritocracy, objectivity and race neutrality of White participants. It is argued that these approaches were underpinned by the normativity, invisibility and operation of whiteness within sport.

This thesis has made a timely contribution to the field of ‘race’ and coaching by illustrating how the reciprocal relationship between colour-blind ideologies and whiteness contains the power to mask racially discriminatory processes in an illusion of ‘race’-neutrality. This supports the denial of both racisms and the necessity of positive action measures. To address these issues, more holistic and interventionist organisational approaches to equality, sensitive to the continuing salience of ‘race’, are needed in men’s professional football coaching, and in elite sport more widely.
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Publications and conference presentations

Publications


Conference Presentations


School of Sport, Exercise and Health Science Post Graduate Research Students Conference, Loughborough, UK (2018) *Game changer or empty promise? An examination of the English Football League mandatory code of coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England* (oral presentation)

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

Sport is popularly believed to exist in a social, political and cultural vacuum (Carrington, 2010; Hylton, 2009). Such beliefs have framed sport as a place that is distinct from the everyday realities of public and political life, where opportunities exist for all groups regardless of background (Hylton, 2009). These narratives have drawn strongly upon the achievements of the growing number of high-profile Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (hereafter BAME) athletes from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds in elite sport settings. This has promoted the myth that ‘if people from one social group can succeed then so should others with similar life chances’ (Hylton, 2009, p. 32). These successes have been appropriated as evidence of the neutrality and meritocracy in sport, whereby talent and motivation are framed as the central determinants in sporting achievement.

The popular perceptions of a ‘melting pot idealism’ within sport are argued however to oversimplify the realities of experiences in elite sporting arenas (Hylton, 2012, p.30). Instead, it is argued that wider societal patterns and realities permeate the boundaries of sport to structure the experiences of different racialised groups (Andersson, 2003, 2007; Hallinan et al., 1999; Hartmann, 2000; Hylton, 2009; James, 2005; Krouwel et al., 2006; Lovell, 1991; Lunde, 2006). For some authors, sport can be understood to constitute a ‘racial formation’ (Carrington, 2013; Hartmann, 2000; Hylton, 2010; Omi and Winant, 2004), which is referred to as ‘the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed’ (Omi and Winant, 2004, p. 124). Such a definition positions sport as both a product and a producer of racial meanings, and thus a field that serves to shape popular ideas around ‘race’. This fluid conceptualisation suggests that sport has the potential to resist or reinforce dominant racial ideologies in society, and whilst elite sport has emancipatory or reformatory capacities, sport’s existence as a racial formation means that racisms in sporting experience remains a constant possibility.
Where racism is identified in sport, it has popularly been framed as a monolithic concept (Back et al, 2001). However, as with society as a whole, professional sport is argued to be a site in which biological, cultural and structural expressions of racism exist (Back et al., 2001; Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2009, 2010). Consequently, many authors today support a definition provided by Anthias and Yuval-Davis, who argue not of a uniform racism but a set of racisms, which must be recognised as a myriad of ‘modes of exclusion, inferiorisation, subordination and exploitation that present specific and different characters in different social and historical contexts’ (1993, p.2). Framing racisms in this way recognises their multiplicity, and the complex and contradictory ways in which they are expressed, experienced and negotiated. Whilst accepting the continuing existence of crude and explicit racisms, institutionalised racisms have been the subject of a growing body of academic work. This has sought to reveal and examine the ways in which the everyday and routinised operations of sport have impeded and disrupted participation in different sporting spheres for BAME individuals and groups (Burdsey, 2011, 2012; Hylton, 2009; Hylton and Lawrence, 2016; Kilvington, 2012; Kilvington and Price, 2013; Long et al, 2005; Rankin- Wright et al, 2016; Ratna et al, 2016).

A key area this work has focused on is the sphere of professional coaching in sport. Over recent decades, the elite tiers of professional sport in a number of countries in the Western world have become characterised by the increasing racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of their playing workforce. In some cases, such as men’s basketball in the USA, this diversity has far outstripped national population demographics (Lapchick and Marfatia, 2017). However, during this period there has been a negligible throughput of BAME players into senior coaching positions. Research has identified the widespread underrepresentation of BAME groups in coaching workforces in a range of elite sport in North American and European settings, including Major League
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Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and professional association football (Bozeman and Fay, 2013; Bradbury, 2013; 2014; Bradbury et al, 2018; Burdsey, 2007; Cunningham, 2010, 2012; DeHass, 2007; King, 2004; Lambourne & Higginson, 2006; Long et al., 2009; North, 2009; Sporting Equals, 2011; Sports Coach UK, 2011; Sports People’s Think Tank, 2014). In instances where there has been a small increase in the levels of minority coaches in sports, statistical gains have largely been limited to peripheral support coach positions with less responsibility or decision-making powers (Braddock et al., 2012; Day and McDonald, 2010; Day 2015). Research into the explanations for these representational figures has identified a range of multi-level barriers experienced by BAME coaches in accessing and negotiating an elite level coaching career. These barriers are argued to have resulted in forms of access and treatment discrimination which deny admittance to coaching positions for prospective coaches, and opportunities for career progression for employed coaches (Agyemang and DeLorme, 2010; Cunningham, 2010; Fletcher et al., 2014; Lapchick, 2018; Norman et al, 2014; Regan and Cunningham, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005; Sanderson, 2010; Schinke et al, 2008; Singer et al, 2005; Wilson et al, 2007).

Much of the findings discussed above are particularly salient within men’s professional football coaching in England. The representation of BAME coaches in senior first-team and senior youth academy positions in men’s English professional football has largely reflected wider patterns in sport, in that the levels of BAME coaches compare highly unfavourably to the levels of BAME players in the game (League Managers Association, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Research has illustrated that despite a playing representation of roughly 30%, between 2014 and 2017, the representation of BAME groups in head coach, assistant coach and additional first team support coach positions has consistently remained around 4% (LMA 2017, SPTT 2017).

These figures are argued to be underpinned by a series of racialised barriers across the pipeline from playing to coach education and coach employment in the professional game (Bradbury 2014, Bradbury et al, 2018). The findings share many similarities with research in other sporting settings. For example, within coach education BAME coaches face limited access to and inequal experiences
within high level coaching qualification courses (Back et al, 2001; Bradbury et al, 2018; King, 2004). BAME coaches have been identified as receiving both limited organisational and club support to access high level coach education courses, and experiences of intentional and unintentional racisms at these courses (Bradbury et al, 2018). Within coach employment, an over-reliance on networks – as opposed to qualifications – based methods of coach recruitment at professional clubs that are premised on personal recommendation, patronage, and sponsored mobility has been claimed to exclude BAME coaches (Bradbury et al, 2018). Unconscious racial bias and stereotyping in coaching workplaces and the related problematisation of BAME coaches as lacking the relevant attitudinal and intellectual skills to become successful coaches has also been argued to underscore the inequity and inopportunity experienced by BAME coaches. These racialised barriers within the sport can be argued to represent a form of institutional racisms in the way that they are embedded in the everyday operations of men’s professional football in England. In this sense, they are reflective of the way in which racisms are not peripheral but central to the organisation of elite sport (Bradbury et al, 2018; Hylton, 2009). These institutionalised patterns of discrimination have been suggested to be underpinned by and illustrative of ‘the invisibility, centrality and normativity of hegemonic Whiteness embedded within the senior organizational tiers of the professional football industry’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p. 330).

Measures designed to address racialised inequities in sport coaching have historically failed to grasp the existence of these routinised and embedded forms of discrimination (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). The racial equality approaches of sports organisations to these issues tend to be limited by their adherence to the principles of equality of opportunity and colour-blindness, and a belief in the equitability of existing arrangements (Lusted, 2017; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). These approaches have maintained the development of policy which positions issues of ‘race’ as a peripheral matter and something that will slowly improve with incremental policy developments (Gillborn, 2008; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Such policies have also been believed to maintain the racial status quo by leaving existing discriminatory institutional arrangements untouched (Hylton, 2009). Some scholars go as far as arguing that pledges to racial equality amongst sports
organisations have often been rhetorical, as commitments are regularly followed by an absence of the action necessary to encourage more equitable outcomes (Ahmed, 2006; Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006).

More recently, there has been the development of a number of approaches in sport coaching which seek to stimulate the conditions considered most likely to result in equality of outcomes. These approaches have centralised ‘race’ in the development of equality policy, in recognition of its continuing salience to sporting experiences and opportunities. Such an approach is personified by the Rooney Rule in the National Football League (NFL) in the USA, which was developed in response to the historic underrepresentation of minority coaches in the sport. The policy, which came into effect in 2003, forces NFL franchises to interview minority candidates as part of the search process for head coaches and other senior coaching positions (Duru, 2007; Lapchick, 2010). This measure seemingly created a platform for meaningful interviews between candidates of colour and team decision-makers, and subsequently quadrupled the levels of minority head coaches in the NFL (Duru, 2014; Agyemang and DeLorme, 2010).

Inspired by the positive impacts of the Rooney Rule, the English Football League’s (EFL) mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment are two positive action measures introduced in men’s professional football in England which similarly focus upon equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity. These measures seek to ‘forcibly’ include BAME coaches in the coach recruitment practices of professional clubs. The mandatory code of coach recruitment exists within the youth academies of professional clubs. The measure demands youth academies to advertise vacant coaching positions for a minimum period of 7 days, and requires that at least one suitably qualified BAME applicant is guaranteed an interview when an application is received for a vacant coaching position (EFL, 2016). The voluntary code of coach recruitment exists at the senior first-team level of professional clubs. This measure expects professional clubs to interview at least one suitably qualified BAME applicant when clubs run a full recruitment process and where an application is received. These two measures can be considered a ‘step change’, in that they dispense with some features and assumptions common to traditional equality approaches in British sport. This is in the way these measures are proactive – as opposed to reactive – in nature, and
more sensitive in their apparent acknowledgement of the existence and impacts of business as usual forms of discrimination. They represent innovative, novel and ultimately timely developments in the approaches of elite sport to issues of underrepresentation, and equality more broadly. What remains presently unknown is the impacts of these positive action measures on the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football at both the youth academy and senior first-team level. Similarly, unknown are the attitudes of those in charge of implementing the codes towards the measures’ central operating principles of diversity and inclusivity.

1.2 Research aims and objectives

This research aims to identify and examine the levels of representation and experiences of BAME coaches and the shape, scope and effectiveness of positive action measures designed to address racialised inequities in men’s professional football in England. In doing so, this research adopts a mixed methods approach which draws on surveys and interviews with BAME coaches and organisational stakeholders. In meeting these aims, this research seeks to investigate the following three key research questions.

1. What are the representation and experiences of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England?

2. What is the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes in addressing racialised inequity in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England?

3. To what extent and in which ways is the implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes informed by the cultural attitudes of key decision makers at clubs?

In answering these research questions, this thesis will make an original and significant contribution to extending academic knowledge in the field of ‘race’, ethnicity, and sport coaching in a number of ways.

Firstly, it will build on and extend existing data sets as to the levels of representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football. Prior research
in this field has focused primarily at the first team level and in relation to senior academy positions (Sports People’s Think Tank, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Research of this kind has reflected the elite level focus of similar research undertaken in professional and college sports contexts in US sports (Lapchick, 2004, 2009, 2018) and in professional football in Europe (Bradbury et al, 2014). This research will extend and broaden knowledge in this field by generating original empirical data which identifies the representation and status of BAME coaches at all levels of the youth academy system at men’s professional clubs. As a result, and in synthesis with existing data, it will provide a more layered account of the representation of BAME coaches within both the adult and youth coaching infrastructures of professional football clubs in England.

Secondly, the thesis will build on and extend knowledge as to the racialized experiences of BAME coaches in men’s football in England. Prior research in this field (as is the case with representation) has focused primarily on the experiences of BAME coaches with experience of working at first team level and in senior academy positions (Bradbury, 2013, Bradbury et al, 2018). Further, whilst this prior work has critically foregrounded the marginalized voices of these coaches, little attention has been paid to ascertaining the perceptions of stakeholders from dominant ethnicities in powerful decision-making positions within the game. This thesis will extend this methodological focus to incorporate the voices of BAME coaches working in both the adult and youth coaching infrastructures of men’s professional clubs, and examine the attitudes and experiences of key organizational stakeholders drawn from a range of dominant and marginalized ethnicities involved in the governance, leadership and coaching tiers of the sport. In doing so, this thesis will enhance the breadth and depth of academic understanding by drawing on and offering a critical analysis of the perceptions of both the excluders and excluded within the football coaching contexts under review.

Thirdly, this thesis will build on and extend knowledge as to the procedural implementation and effectiveness of racial equality measures in men’s professional football in England. Little prior research has been undertaken in this specific field, whilst research in British sport more widely has examined the
implementation of formal racial equality charters and standards. This research found that the implementation and effectiveness of these measures have been at least partially undermined by their audit-based approach which prioritize superficial outcomes over organizational change (Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006). This thesis extends this knowledge through examining the implementation of two positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England. Owing to their underutilization in British sport thus far, little is known of the procedural implementation and effectiveness of these specific and interventionist approaches, which demand not only evidence of action but also evidence of change within organizations. In investigating the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment, this thesis will enhance the breadth and depth of academic understanding of the utility of positive action approaches to racial equality in the football coaching contexts under review, and British sport more broadly.

Fourthly, this thesis will extend knowledge as to the attitudinal implementation and effectiveness of racial equality measures in men’s professional football in England. Prior research in this broad area has focused upon the attitudes of policymakers in the arenas of local grassroots football governance in England (Lusted, 2009), and the implementation of racial equality measures in British sport more widely (Spracklen et al, 2006; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). This research has found that the dominance of Whiteness at the organizational level of sporting bodies has traditionally resisted the development of more interventionist racial equality measures. This thesis will build on and extend this knowledge in two ways. Firstly, this thesis will examine the attitudinal implementation interventionist positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England, which in this instance are not merely options within a racial equality charter but instead an obligation. Moreover, this thesis will examine not only the attitudes of policymakers and coaches, but also key organizational stakeholders drawn from a range of dominant and marginalized ethnicities involved in the governance, leadership and coaching tiers of men’s professional football in England. In doing so, this thesis will make explicit the impact of organizational cultures and power relations on the implementation and
effectiveness of positive action measures in the coaching contexts under review.

Fifthly, the thesis will draw on and apply Critical Race Theory (CRT) to the topic under review. This theoretical (and methodological) framework centralises ‘race’ in its perspectives of inequality and inopportunity in society and argues that racisms are not isolated or aberrational acts, but rather are central and permanent aspects of the everyday realities of societal groups (Castaneda and Zuniga, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2003). In recent years, a number of sports scholars in the US, UK and continental Europe have drawn on the theoretical insights provided by CRT to examine the ways in which dominant liberal ideologies of colour blindness, race neutrality and meritocracy are played out in sporting contexts. For example, in relation to sports participation, authors have utilised CRT to make sense of the racially inequal experiences of BAME athletes. In first-class English cricket, Burdsey highlights draws upon Bonilla-Silva’s colour-blind racism framework to explore the mitigation of a series of racialized microaggressions targeted at South Asian players (2004). Whilst in Norway, Massao and Fasting have utilised CRT to make explicit the connections between individual, collective and institutional practices and the ways in which they normalise racism in elite sport and underpin prejudicial and inequal experiences for Black athletes (2010). In professional sport coaching authors have drawn upon CRT to explain the underrepresentation and experiences of BAME coaches and managers. For example, the work of Singer et al draws upon CRT’s critiques of Whiteness to identify the ways in which casual and informal recruitment practices in North American college sport reproduce the privilege that whites have historically held in senior leadership positions (2010). In Britain, the work of Rankin-Wright et al (2016) draws upon CRT’s critique of dominant liberal ideologies to illustrate how deeply embedded discourses of colour-blindness and equal opportunity within sport coaching organisations serve to problematise BAME coaches (2016). Whilst in professional football coaching in England, Bradbury et al have drawn upon CRT to both explain and suggest remedial action to address the underrepresentation and inequal experiences of BAME coaches and managers (2018). Whilst this latter work has offered some useful theoretical analysis of the multi-layered
Introduction

barriers experienced by BAME coaches, only minimal attention has been paid thus far to examining the extent and ways in which such dominant ideologies and practices have informed the shape, scope and efficacy of racial equality measures in sport. This thesis extends work in this field by examining the utility of CRT as a theoretical mechanism through which to examine how attitudes towards the salience of race and racisms have impacted on the implementation and effectiveness of positive action measures designed to address racialised inequities in coaching in men’s professional football in England. The key tenets of CRT and its applicability to this thesis are outlined more fully in Chapter 2 (Theoretical Overview: Critical Race Theory) and will be drawn on and expanded further throughout this thesis and with particular respect to Chapter 9 (Attitudinal implementational of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment) and Chapter 10 (Conclusion).

1.3 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 will begin with an outline of popular and academic ideas of ‘race’ and racisms, before outlining the development and central tenets of the CRT approach adopted in this thesis. It will provide a CRT-informed practical definition of racisms, which will structure subsequent analyses and discussions throughout the thesis. The chapter will draw upon work from key CRT scholars to outline six central tenets of CRT that are most apposite to this thesis. These are the permanence of ‘race’ and racisms; critiquing dominant liberal ideologies of meritocracy and ‘race’-neutrality; critiquing colour-blind ideologies; a commitment to social justice; the centralisation of the marginalised voice; and Whiteness. The outlining of these central tenets will not only provide a theoretical platform for thesis, but also help to build the theoretical approach of this thesis by examining the application and relevance of CRT to the study of ‘race’, sport and coaching.

Chapter 3 focuses on the relationship between ‘race’, sport and coaching. In doing so, this chapter will outline the representation of BAME coaches in a range of North American and British sporting settings, before drawing upon relevant empirical research to explore explanations for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in these environments. This chapter will then outline the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in Western European and
English settings, before examining explanations for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in these environments

Chapter 4 is a contextual chapter which will examine approaches to engendering equality in society and sport. This chapter will begin with an outline of predominant models of equality in society, comprising formal, liberal, and radical approaches. This chapter will then examine the development and implementation of approaches to engendering equality in British sport. These issues will then be explored in regard to racial equality, particularly in the field of sport coaching. This will focus on Britain and also North America, where there has been a development of more bespoke equality measures to patterns of racial inequity within sport coaching. This chapter will then examine approaches to racial equality in men’s professional football coaching in England.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodological underpinnings central to this research. This chapter will begin by outlining the paradigmatic justifications of this research, including discussions on the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives of this research. The chapter will then explore the research design of this thesis, with respect to relevant sampling techniques, issues related to gaining access to the sample group, and important ethical considerations around issues of confidentiality and anonymity. This chapter will also discuss the types of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques utilised in this research, before justifying both the relevance of these techniques for this specific piece of research, and the ways in which they were analysed. This chapter will then conclude with a reflexive account of the research process. This will discuss the ways in which my own White identity impacted upon different stages of the research process, with particular respect to data collection and analysis.

Chapter 6 is the first data analysis chapter of this thesis. The first half of this chapter will draw upon secondary and primary data to outline and explore the emerging patterns and trends in the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England. The second half of this chapter will then draw upon qualitative data to analyse the experiences of BAME coaches in attempting to secure positions of paid employment in men’s professional football in England. Key findings examined in this section will be limited access to elite level coaching
qualifications, networks-based approaches to coach recruitment, and racial bias and stereotypes in coach recruitment.

Chapter 7 is the second data analysis chapter of this thesis. This chapter will begin with a brief exploration of the youth academy coaching infrastructure in men’s professional football in England. This chapter will then examine the principles of the mandatory code of coach recruitment in relation to the literature examined in chapter 4, before discussing the code’s development and implementation at the national level. The chapter will then examine the procedural implementation of the mandatory code within youth academies, and examine its effectiveness using data from online surveys and qualitative interviews with BAME coaches, academy managers and key organisational stakeholders.

Chapter 8 is the third data analysis chapter of this thesis. This chapter will begin with a brief exploration of the professional club first-team coaching infrastructure in men’s professional football in England. This chapter will then examine the principles of the voluntary code of coach recruitment in relation to the literature examined in chapter 4, before discussing the code’s development and implementation at the national level. This chapter will then examine the procedural implementation of the voluntary code within professional club first-teams, and examine its effectiveness using data from qualitative interviews with BAME coaches, academy managers and key organisational stakeholders.

Chapter 9 is the fourth and final data analysis chapter of this thesis. This chapter will draw upon key theoretical tenets of CRT to examine the ways in which the racial ideologies adopted by senior decision-makers underpinned the implementation of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment. The chapter will begin by examining the presence of colour-conscious approaches to coach recruitment amongst senior staff. This section will explore three emergent themes in this respect; the recognition of racialised barriers in coach recruitment; valuing cultural diversity in the coaching workplace; and organisational buy-in to the codes of recruitment. This chapter will then examine the presence of colour-blind approaches to coach recruitment amongst senior staff. This section will also explore three emergent themes in this respect; the denial of racialised barriers in coach recruitment; liberalist ideologies in the coaching workplace; and a lack of
organisational buy-in to the codes of recruitment.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion of this thesis. This chapter will begin by re-iterating the broader context in which this thesis is located, before summarising and then discussing the key findings of the research. These empirical and theoretical discussions will draw heavily on relevant tenets of Critical Race Theory, in particular the permanence of ‘race’ and racisms, the critique of dominant liberal ideologies, and Whiteness. Within this, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s frames of colour-blind racism will be drawn upon to theoretically locate emergent themes from this research. This chapter will also provide some empirically and theoretically informed recommendations for key organisational stakeholders, including governing bodies, club and youth academy executive, leadership and coaching staff, and coaches. Finally, it will reflect on strengths and limitations of the thesis and suggest potential areas of future research which may further enhance knowledge in this field.

**Terminology**

Before moving on to chapter 2, this early stage of the thesis is a suitable place in which to outline a key terminological point. It will have been noted that this thesis adopts the term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) when referring to Britain’s ‘non-White’ population. This is in recognition of the privileges effortlessly enjoyed by White groups and individuals in Britain yet denied to those who are not White. This thesis recognises the relative crudeness and oversimplification of using the term White (itself a highly nebulous category) and an acronym such as BAME to refer to the vast levels of ethnic and cultural diversity within Britain’s minority ethnic populations. In addition, this thesis recognises the problematic contradiction of ethnic and racial classifications and the ways that they identify particularly groups as simultaneously ‘quantitatively aberrant’ from majority populations and internally ‘qualitatively homogenous’ (Carty and Brand, 1993, cited in Asutosh, 2014, p. 131). As such, these classifications – often developed by majority groups themselves – reinforce the notion of minority groups as something inherently ‘different’, yet a difference that is sanitised by the use of terms or acronyms that conceal substantial diversity (Aspinall, 2011). That said, the use of ‘any official category will conceal some heterogeneity’ (Aspinall, 2009,
p. 1425), and it has been noted that ‘there is little in the lexicon of terms that is not contested’ (Aspinall, 2002, p. 804). Ideally, self-identification should be given priority over imposed categorisation within research into ‘race’ and racisms, particularly when research is undertaken with BAME participants and a white researcher. However, the use of this term BAME is advocated as it implies that there is also a ‘majority ethnic’ group, and with it the implication that this dominant majority has their own ethnicity (Cole, 1993). This attempts to highlight that ethnicity is a feature of the identities of all groups – not just something possessed by the non-white population. More practically, a theoretical analysis demands a consistent use of terminology, and so within this thesis it is considered necessary to adopt the terminology used by others, researching and developing policy in this broad area. For example, the focus of this research – the EFL’s mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment – utilises this term, as do other key stakeholder organisations in the sport, such as the League Managers Association (LMA), The Football Association (FA) and Kick It Out, English professional football’s foremost equality and inclusion charity.
2 Theoretical overview: Critical Race Theory

2.1 Introduction

This theoretical chapter will consist of three sections. Firstly, this chapter is concerned with an outline of ‘race’ and racisms. This will examine ‘race’ as a form of social division and hierarchy and examine the pseudo-scientific foundations upon which ‘race’ was established. This section will then consider ‘race’ as a social construction; which recognises ‘race’ as an ideological and discursive construct which continues to have material consequences. Next, the existence of a singular monolithic and biological racism will be deconstructed as part of arguments which posit the existence of fluid, complex and insidious racisms, which are inconsistent in their nature and impact. Secondly, this chapter will outline the development and central tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) to be utilised in this thesis. This will establish a CRT-informed practical definition of racisms, which will structure subsequent analyses and discussions throughout the thesis. This section will draw upon work from key CRT scholars to outline six central tenets of CRT that are most apposite to this thesis. These six tenets will frame the remaining chapters in this thesis and consist of; the permanence of ‘race’ and racisms; critiquing dominant liberal ideologies of meritocracy, race’ neutrality and equal opportunity; critiquing colour-blind ideologies; a commitment to social justice; centralising the marginalised voice; and whiteness. These central tenets will be outlined in order to provide a theoretical platform for thesis, informing future literature review, methodology and analyses chapters. Thirdly, this chapter will outline the application and relevance of CRT to the study of ‘race’ and sport. This will consider the relevance of CRT as a means of theorising sport, as well as how and in which areas CRT has been used to theorise sport. This will be done to illustrate the application and relevance of CRT to this thesis.

2.2 Conceptualising ‘race’ and racisms

Initially emerging in the expansion of the European imperialist project which posited that different ‘races’ embodied fixed and discrete biological entities...
(Richards, 1997), traditionally ‘race’ was characterised as an essential genetic feature of humankind which could be used to classify different human groups. These categorisations were established upon crude and now scientifically discredited associations between phenotypical characteristics and intellectual and physical abilities, which subscribed to the belief of a discernible and measurable biological and genetical quality to ‘race’ (Richards, 1997). The notion of a singular concept of ‘race’ was further promoted by the advent of Social Darwinanism in the latter 19th century. These flawed ideas were misappropriated and framed as evidence as to the existence of a ‘natural’ genetic hierarchy between different racial groups (Richards, 1997), which fuelled popular ideas on ‘race’ forming part of a continuing evolutionary project (Banton, 1999).

Despite the scientific baselessness of this racial ideology (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001) ‘racial theorising’ was nonetheless falsely legitimised and provided fertile ground for the emergence of scientific racism and intellectual movements such as eugenics (Banton, 2010). The effects of these ideologies of superiority and inferiority between different ‘races’ could be seen in the events of the Second World War, and in particular the crimes of the Holocaust. In response to these atrocities and the biological belief systems which underpinned them, the idea of a scientifically discernible concept of ‘race’ came under attack; most visibly in the work of population geneticists under the banner of the United Nations (UN). This work came to produce the UNSECO statements of 1950 and 1951, which marked a ‘consensus among social scientists and natural scientists that population geneticists had successfully demonstrated that “race” is a social construct without biological foundation’ (Gannett, 2001, p. 482).

In spite of these widely accepted arguments stressing it’s scientific meaningless, ‘race’ has continued to be reified in both academic and popular discourse. For example, the work of some academic scholars has continued to embody a biologically deterministic view on ‘race’ (Herrnstein and Murray, 2010; Rowe, 2002; Shiao et al 2012). Albeit widely criticised on theoretical and methodological grounds work of this nature has received great public attention and at various times reanimated beliefs in the scientific ‘properties’ of ‘race’ (Byrd and Hughey, 2015). Furthermore, the reification of ‘race’ has been energised by what McCann-Mortimer et al identify as the ‘entrenched use of ‘race’ as a commonsense,
‘natural’ category to classify people in both everyday and scientific discourse’ (2004, p. 411). This has created the impression of a ‘naturalness’ to ‘race’ which assumes the existence of fixed racial categories and the possession of immutable characteristics (Lee and Lutz, 2005b). The everyday usage of ‘race’ in media, entertainment and policy (and academic) discourse means that efforts to challenge the ideological and imagined nature of ‘race’ whilst simultaneously emphasising and challenging its continuing material outcomes continues to prove a difficult task (Hylton, 2009).

Critical race theorists are wary of these tensions. As such, it is argued that ‘a realist pragmatism underpins all iterations of the term ‘race’’, as the concept retains little traction in science yet at the same time is a lived reality (Hylton and Lawrence, 2016, p. 7). To reflect this paradox, this thesis adopts the use of so-called scare quotes to problematise the everyday use of ‘race’ in simple and rudimentary languages (Warmington, 2009). In doing so, this forms part of ongoing critical challenges to ‘race’ and racism(s) that seeks to avoid the indirect reinforcement of ‘race’ as a fixed category by drawing on a more considered vocabulary (Hylton and Lawrence, 2016). In light of these etymological and ideological issues, this thesis subscribes to the definition of ‘race’ outlined by Solomos and Back, who state that;

‘Race and ethnic categories are ideological entities that are made and remade through struggle. In this sense, race can be seen as a discursive category through which differences are accorded social significance. But it is also more than just a discursive category since it carries with it material consequences for those who are included within, or excluded from, a particular racial identity’ (1996, p. xiv)

Cognisant of these contestations, this thesis proceeds on the basis that ‘race’ as biology is fiction, whilst ‘race’ as a social problem is real’ (Smedley and Smedley, 2005, p.16). Similarly, the work of Chong-Soon Lee (1995) reminds practitioners that ‘race’ is not defined by its ‘inherent content but by the social relations that construct it’ (in Hylton, 2005, p. 91). These inconsistent and enduring characteristics of ‘race’ are reflected in dominant CRT perspectives, which posit what Delgado and Stefancic refer to as the ‘social construction’ thesis (2001, p.7).
This conceptualisation recognises this contested and ‘created’ history of ‘race’, and accordingly argues that ‘race’ and ‘races’ are products of social ideas and relations. Furthermore, ‘race’ and ‘races’ are viewed from a CRT perspective as arbitrary categories that society remains in a perpetual state of reinventing, manipulating, or retiring when deemed irrelevant (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). This is not to argue that this is a random process, rather CRT scholars broadly argue that the construction of ‘race’ is established upon institutional power, and the ways in which this power is exercised by dominant groups in society (Castaneda and Zuniga, 2013; Haney-Lopez, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001).

For Armstrong and Ng ‘race is the social construction, but the act and effect of this construction (racialisation) have produced actual divisions between people’ (2005, p.35). Such complexities and contradictions around understandings and expressions of ‘race’ have been mirrored in academic and popular ideas around the related concept of racism(s), which have been wide-ranging and complex in their theorisations of its characteristics and impacts (Banton, 1967; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Solomos and Back, 1996; Doane, 2006; Hylton, 2009; Miles, 2004; Smedley and Smedley, 2005). Long and McNamee identify this as they claim ‘what originally seemed a fairly straightforward concept, ‘racism’, has become increasingly complex’ (2004, p.406). Whilst traditionally and popularly racisms are considered as an intentional set of individual prejudices and behaviours (Hylton, 2010), this thesis instead adopts a broadly racialisation perspective which subscribes to a pluralistic definition of racism(s). This perspective shifts attention away from a singular, monolithic concept of racism to one which considers ‘the nature and processes of heterogeneous racisms, and how these racisms differ due to temporal and spatial (and other) factors’ (Garland and Rowe, 2001, p. 9-10). In doing so, it is acknowledged racially motivated discrimination ‘negatively impacts specific social groups at different levels’, and ‘is experienced in different ways' (Hylton, 2009, p. 10). From this perspective, racisms can be considered to operate on a variety of spectrums, such as direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious or against individuals or groups in society (Hylton, 2009). As a consequence, this thesis adopts the definition of racisms forwarded by Anthias and Yuval-Davis, who propose that racisms should be recognised as;
2 Theoretical overview

‘Modes of exclusion, inferiorisation, subordination, and exploitation that present specific and different characters in different social and historical contexts’ (1993, p.2).

In this sense, this thesis considers a fluid definition that goes beyond simplistic and one-dimensional positions of racisms and instead recognises their historical, institutional and structural nature (Hylton, 2010). In this sense, racisms are multi-dimensional and multi-levelled (Cunningham, 2010; Mason, 2000; Miles, 1989). This is particularly significant as it is contended that;

‘When we examine the process of ‘racialisation’ we find that our beliefs about ‘races’ and ‘race relations’ have more to do with the attitudes, actions, motivations and interests of powerful groups in society; and less to do with the characteristics, attitudes and actions of those who are defined as belonging to inferior ‘races’. ’ (Small, 1994, p.28)

The above definition alludes to the importance of operating a more contextual and layered understanding of the ways in which myriad forms of racisms might serve to marginalise some groups whilst benefiting others across a range of racialised boundaries. It is to a more detailed Critical Race Theory analysis of the processes and outcomes of racisms and discrimination to which this thesis now turns.

2.3 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be considered a product of the socio-cultural conditions from which it emerged. The theory’s origins in the aftermath of the advancements made during the civil rights movement in the United States of America (USA) in the 1960’s reflected a growing frustration that ‘race’ and racism had come to be considered a ‘relic’ due to the newly passed legislation which heralded the end of state-sponsored racism (Delgado and Stefancic, 1998). That CRT originated as a ‘breakout’ from Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in the US reflected a dissatisfaction that CLS had failed to consider the role of ‘race’ and racism in the legal processes of the US and the often hidden ways in which the seemingly ‘neutral’ legal system continued to disproportionately work against minority ethnic groups (Bell, 1976; Bell, 1984; Delgado, 1984). This split to
develop a critical ‘race’ theoretical and methodological practice was also informed by a wider impression that ‘race’ and racisms had come to be wilfully ignored in wider US society, and that instead of retreating as a real form of social stratification, racism continued to exist in subtle and more insidious forms (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

In assessing the application of CRT in contexts other than North America, Burdsey proposes the idea that CRT is not limited to one cultural milieu (2010). This is expanded on by Gillborn who identifies the transferability of CRT as an approach to other national and cultural settings. He claims that whilst CRT has:

‘Remained an almost exclusively American approach… there is no reason why the conceptual tools and techniques developed by critical race scholars elsewhere cannot be adopted and refined through their application in other nation states’ (2008, p.1).

The moulding of CRT frameworks to specific national and cultural settings has caused CRT to be a theory that is ‘neither unified nor homogeneous’ (Burdsey, 2011, p. 278), seen in the development of similar, specifically located theories such as LatCrit and TribalCrit. Consequently, Burdsey argues the position that if CRT can rise above disciplinary and methodological boundaries then so too can ‘contextual’ confines be transcended (2010). The emphasis within CRT upon the subtle and complex relationships between ‘racialised structures, ideologies, and discourses’ is not limited to specific spatial-temporal or national conditions (Burdsey, 2011, p.275). Rather, it is contended the main precepts of a CRT framework may be utilised for the analysis of contemporary racisms across a range of western, neoliberal environments (Burdsey, 2011).

This thesis utilises six tenets which broadly lie within a CRT framework, however these are not ‘ultimate’ or ‘essential’ canons. Rather they draw upon a collection of basic insights (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) or defining elements (Tate, 1997). The tenets utilised in this thesis reflect current principles which have emerged as dominant contemporary CRT tenets within modern socio-political trends and narratives. On this note CRT can be considered a theory of ongoing development, particularly in Britain in which it’s transposition from the US remains relatively early and scarce, especially in the field of sport. In this sense, as CRT grows ‘the
range and sophistication of its conceptual toolbox becomes a little clearer’ (Gillborn, 2006, p. 12). Concepts which have previously been seen as CRT ‘staples’, may now be considered more as apparatuses or tools instead of definitive doctrines. Similarly, theoretical perspectives not specifically developed as part of a CRT approach have subsequently been co-opted on occasions into a CRT framework. For example, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s frames of colour-blind racism were not expressly developed as part of a CRT framework (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). However, this is a framework that has increasingly appeared centrally within CRT-informed work (Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2010; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). This section now turns to an outline of six common principles of CRT that will underpin future chapters of this thesis.

2.3.1 The permanence of ‘race’ and racisms

The basis of a CRT framework is the theory’s ideas on the nature and extent of ‘race’ and racisms in Western societies. CRT scholars argue that racisms are ‘normal’ and ‘everyday’ rather than isolated or discrete events (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2013). In this sense, racisms are argued by CRT scholars to be ‘engrained’ (Delgado and Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi). This is argued to effectively normalise racial discrimination to the point of invisibility (but not for those who experience it), as Ladson-Billings reflects how racisms are so ‘enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture’ (Ladson-Billings, p.11, 1998). The intertwining of ideas of ‘race’ and racial meaning within dominant social and cultural narratives have produced what Decuir and Dixson characterise as ‘racist hierarchical structures’ which ‘govern all political, economic and social domains’ (2004, p.27). Consequently, CRT scholars Delgado and Stefancic reference how the permanence of racisms in society mean that it is the absence of racisms which is aberrational, whilst its presence is to be expected (2001).

Whilst racisms in popular discourse have largely been framed as singular, monolithic and intentional, a CRT framework instead cites the existence of a pluralistic and heterogenous arrangement of conscious and unconscious racisms and patterns of racialised (Lopez, 2003). CRT scholars do not deny the existence
of more crude and blatant forms of racisms, however Bernasconi perceives that these forms of individual and group prejudice are ‘symptomatic’ of – as opposed to distinct from – structural and systemic racism (Bernasconi, 2016, p.9). This is a perspective echoed by Essed, who identifies that seemingly individualised forms of racism are a manifestation of wider cultural and structural dynamics (2001). Moreover, Solórzano et al note that the way racisms are experienced and negotiated at the level of the ‘everyday’ are underpinned by institutional forms of power (2000).

The institutionalised and structural underpinnings of racisms are thus the key area of interest for CRT scholars. As such, analysis is targeted at ‘the business-as-usual forms of racism’, that are normal yet almost invisibly embedded in the ‘everydayness’ of society (Gillborn, 2006, p. 22). Consequently, CRT theorists argue that ideas and narratives around what racisms constitute must take into account the notion that racisms can be both seen and unseen. This more nuanced perspective is presented by Gillborn, who notes that;

‘It is of central importance that the term “racism” is used not only in relation to crude, obvious acts of race hatred but also in relation to the more subtle and hidden operations of power that have the effect of disadvantaging one or more minority ethnic groups’ (2006, p.19)

Whilst CRT theorists acknowledge the existence of more explicit and crude forms of racisms, they seek to move away from what Gillborn refers to as the ‘endless debate on intent’ (2006, p.19). The popular focus on intent is argued to promote the existence of a readily identifiable, one-dimensional racism – which in turn structures approaches and policies designed to address racialised inequality and inopportunity. Instead CRT conceptualisations of racisms adopt an outcome-oriented approach which consider the effects of everyday taken for granted and often unconscious actions and processes. In Britain for example, the publication of the ‘Race’ Disparity Audit’ exposed ‘significant disparities between and within ethnic groups’ in regard to employment, education, housing and crime and policing (UK Cabinet Office, 2018). From a CRT perspective, this report does not reveal a host of malicious efforts to discriminate against minority ethnic groups, rather these findings reveal the routineness and everydayness of racialised
inequality and the seemingly ‘normal’ practices and processes that underpin this.

Having considered the permanence and embeddedness of ‘race’ and racisms in society, a CRT framework advocates the centralisation of ‘race’ and racisms in any attempts to challenge racial inequality (Hylton, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Parker, 1998). To this end, Gillborn notes that efforts to address racisms must be flexible yet incisive, as ‘the strategy becomes one of unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations’ (2006, p.19). The ordinariness and endemic role of racisms in the experiences of BAME groups necessitates that ‘race’ must be principal to discussions and research around inequality in society; a claim supported by Parker and Lynn (2002), who posit that the foremost objective of CRT is to reveal and unsettle racism. This does not mean that ‘race’ is the only concern for CRT-informed research, or that ‘race’ is always the central issue in making sense of every instance of exclusion experienced by BAME groups (Gillborn, 2015). Rather, a CRT approach encourages a consideration of how ‘race’ intersects with indices, such as gender, class, religion and age, and the ways in which racial inequity is influenced by numerous factors (Gillborn, 2015; Hylton, 2009). CRT can be considered a politicised theory in its demand of scholars to consider less traditional mainstream questions of methodology, but more the development of a critical, race-centred epistemology which provides a more nuanced and rounded insight into the experiences of BAME groups in society and sport (Hylton, 2009).

2.3.2 Critiquing dominant liberal ideologies of meritocracy and ‘race’-neutrality

CRT’s critique of liberalism emerges from its scepticism towards the ability of traditional legal discourse to address anything other than the most blatant and crude versions of racisms (Gillborn, 2006; McCoy and Rodricks, 2015). Delgado and Stefancic reflect how ‘virtually all of Critical Race Theory is marked by deep discontent with liberalism’, a system which is argued to be ‘characterised by incrementalism, faith in the legal system, and hope for progress’ (2000, p.1). CRT theorists are critical of the traditional liberal ideals of objectivity, meritocracy and race-neutrality (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Whilst at ‘face-value’ these concepts appear to be attractive and principled goals synonymous with progressive, modern and liberal citizens, in reality they are argued to sustain
racialised inequality and restrict the development of more radical approaches to tackle this (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004). It is argued these seemingly egalitarian ideals are argued to be ‘camouflage for the self-interest, power and privilege of dominant groups’ (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001, p.473).

The principle of meritocracy for example is argued by CRT theorists to be a myth (Milner IV, 2008). Proponents of meritocracy are argued to support the idea that if ‘people in general just worked hard or harder, then they would be rewarded for their hard work and could achieve, realize, and reach their full potential’ (Milner IV, 2008, p. 343). These ‘Jeffersonian’ ideals of hard work and motivation (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) are problematic for CRT theorists as it is argued that to infer significant social mobility is available to anyone with the requisite levels of ability and desire overlooks ‘institutionalized and systemic issues that permeate policies and practices’ (Milner IV, 2008, p.343). Related to this, ideas of ‘race’-neutrality are argued to protect the impression of a neutral social order that works for all members of a society (Lopez, 2003). However, these ideas of neutrality are argued to deracialise inequality and experiences and strip them of ‘their racial underpinnings’ (Lopez, 2003, p.81). These ideals are thus argued to present racial inequity as an individual problem, as opposed to a social one. The existence of systemic and institutionalised racisms in society is consequently denied, and instead promoted is a ‘cheery and simplistic take on how racism actually functions in society, as well as a naïve understanding how it can be resolved and remedied’ (Lopez, 2003, p. 81). These liberal ideologies are of concern for CRT theorists as they are taken for granted ideals that are regularly endorsed in many modern, Western societies (Crenshaw et al, 1995). Taken together, for Gillborn a CRT-informed approach must work to expose these ideologies as;

‘It is simply and demonstrably the case that these notions, despite their apparent concern for equity and justice, operate as a mechanism by which particular groups are excluded from the mainstream (be it in relation to legal redress, employment, or educational opportunities)’ (Gillborn, 2006, p. 22).

2.3.3 Critiquing colour-blind ideologies
A binding principle of many of liberalist ideologies is the *colour-blind* belief that ‘race’ is no longer of significant influence on the everyday experiences and social mobility of minority ethnic groups in western societies (Worthington et al., 2008). This is a perception which is adjoined by a belief that colour blindness – to not see ‘race’ – is synonymous with an absence of racism (Ford and Airhihenbuwa, 2010). However, it is argued that such colour-blind perspectives are premised upon a one-dimensional view of racisms which fails to consider subtle, coded and institutionalised forms of racisms. Colour-blind perspectives are also argued to be ahistorical in nature, by ignoring the ways in which the unequal status of different racial groups in society are a product of historical racisms (Carr, 1997; Crenshaw, 1997; Moore and Bell, 2011). These approaches thus overlook the idea that ‘inequity, inopportunity, and oppression are historical artefacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society’ (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p. 29). To ignore ‘race’ is consequently argued to simply reproduce the contemporary racial order, which works to address only the most ‘egregious racial harms’ that a majority in society would condemn (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p. 22).

A key theoretical framework developed to examine the presence and effects of these colour-blind ideals in society is Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s frames of colour-blind racism (2003). A theoretical descendant of the ‘new racism’ approach, this colour-blind racism framework postulates that derogatory attitudes towards BAME groups ‘have blended with traditional Western value systems such as meritocracy and individualism to mask racism’ (Hughey, 2007, p. 71). Although not explicitly developed as part of a CRT perspective, the four frames of colour-blind racism have since been co-opted into the approaches of many CRT-informed scholars as part of critiques of the liberal values outlined above. This is also true in sport literature, where the colour-blind racism ideology forms a central part of several CRT approaches to issues of discrimination and inequality (Hylton, 2009; Burdsey, 2011; Rankin-Wright et al., 2016; Singer et al., 2010). These four theoretical frames ‘set paths for interpreting information’ which allows dominant groups in society to explain racial inequality and discrimination in distinctly non-racial terms, all the whilst appearing ‘liberal’ and ‘progressive’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 26). These frames are argued to be utilised by those benefitting from
racial hierarchical societies to maintain positions of dominance and power (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), and will inform central arguments throughout this thesis, particularly in later analysis and discussion chapters. The central frames are labelled by Bonilla-Silva as abstract liberalism, naturalisation, cultural racism, and minimisation of racism and all at a fundamental level are bound by a colour-blind rationalisation of ‘racially unfair situations’ (2003, p.28). Of these four frames, abstract liberalism is deemed to be the most significant, pervasive and dangerous due to ‘its seemingly conciliatory, rational and yet commonly heard arguments’ (Hylton, 2010, p. 341).

The frame of abstract liberalism is argued to ‘use ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., “equal opportunity,” the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice and individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p.28). This is argued to allow White groups to appear ‘fair’ and ‘progressive’, whilst at the same time opposing many practical attempts to challenge systemic racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Crenshaw, 1997; Moore and Bell, 2011). A key feature of this frame of abstract liberalism is the notion of equality of opportunity, a principle which demands the equal treatment of every member of society regardless of racial identity in this instance. Now that legislation exists in many Western societies (and sports) which forbids discrimination or segregation on the grounds of ‘race’, colour-blind perspectives are argued to support beliefs that ‘segregation and discrimination are no longer an issue, because it is now illegal for individuals to be denied access to housing, public accommodations or jobs because of their race’ (Gallagher, 2003, p.26). In this sense, notions of equality of opportunity are argued to rationalise the inequity experienced by marginalised groups as a problem of their own making, as the same opportunities are believed to exist for all members of society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). It is these ideologies which have resisted the introduction and longevity of radical equality measures such as affirmative action policies in the US, which have been popularly framed as ‘violations of democratic principles’ in the way that they are seen to ‘privilege the underserving’ (Doane, 2006, p. 259). According to Bonilla-Silva, the misguided perception of fairness created by the notion of equal opportunity is used to block efforts and measures to engender actual fairness for BAME groups (2003).
Consequently, it is argued that formalised equal opportunity policies are ill-equipped to redress permanent and embedded racisms in society (and sport) and offer only the most incremental of change (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Hylton, 2009). In this sense, the frame of abstract liberalism is argued to be ahistorical and uncritical in its failure to locate the structural inequality which underpins the underrepresentation of many BAME groups in the UK for example, in senior positions in fields such as education, the labour market and sport (Noon, 2010; UK Cabinet Office, 2018).

The frame of naturalisation of racism is argued by Bonilla-Silva to allow White groups to explain away racial phenomena and racialised exclusion as ‘natural occurrences’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). For example, it is argued that adopting this frame allows White groups to explain racialised aspects of society such as underrepresentation or patterns of homologous reproduction in the labour market (Cunningham, 2010) as a result of the ways in which people from all backgrounds gravitate towards people in their own likeness (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). It is argued that discourse which falls under the naturalisation frame actually ‘dumbs down’ the significance of ‘race’; reinforcing what is referred to as the ‘myth of nonracialism’ (2003, p.28). This is performed by broadly generalising these patterns of behaviour as ‘human nature’ and typical of all members of society. In doing so, this frame seeks to rationalise associations and gravitation towards someone with the same or similar racial identity as ‘non-racial’. Rhodes exemplifies this frame in the response of New Labour to riots in Britain in 2001, in which the identification of perceived ‘self-segregation’ of many BAME (predominantly South Asian) communities in areas of North-West England gave credence to notions of essentialist cultural traits. This was felt to endorse beliefs that there were inherent compatibilities between South Asian cultures and local ‘White British’ norms and overlook the impacts of other potential underlying tensions such as national and localised ‘institutional practices that serve to reinforce and produce racialised inequalities’ (Rhodes, 2009, 3.9). These patterns are illustrative of the ways in which discrimination and inequity can be rationalised as natural within the frame of naturalisation, and not a product of wider structural inequality.

The frame of cultural racism is one that is based upon culturally based arguments
to rationalise the experiences and positions of BAME groups in society. Bonilla-Silva (2003) notes how ideas around the genetic dominance and deficiencies of White and BAME groups respectively have been largely, but not completely, consigned to the preserve of White supremacist organisations. However, the cultural racism frame posits that these biologically grounded views have in some instances mutated into cultural and codified racisms which subscribe to the perceived essential and fixed characteristics of different ‘racial’ groups, which ultimately positions BAME groups ‘as culturally rather than biologically inadequate’ (Rodriquez, 2006, p. 648). This shift is argued to alter what counts as racisms, as Haney-Lopez outlines how ‘under the semiotics of colorblindness, only open references to skin color or the use of explicitly derogatory racial epithets count as racism’ (2003, p. 816). Gallagher exemplifies this in the US, where he identifies colour-blind ideologies amongst White groups which encompass ‘an ideology that blames blacks themselves for their poorer relative economic standing, seeing it as a function of perceived cultural inferiority’ (Gallagher, 2003, p.32).

The minimisation of racism frame disputes the salience of ‘race’ as a factor in explaining the standing of BAME groups in society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This frame is argued to cite the ‘progression’ that societies are believed to have made in eradicating racisms, and in doing so divert attention away from racisms as an explanation for embedded racial inequity (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Harper, 2012). These discourses of progression are argued to compel White groups ‘to view discrimination through the narrow lens of overt, outrageously racist acts. Anything that falls short is often misperceived as minoritized persons being “hypersensitive” or unfairly playing the “race card”’ (Harper, 2012, p. 12). This frame is therefore premised upon a one-dimensional conceptualisation of racisms which identifies only it’s most crude, explicit and intentional expressions (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2009). The work of Bimper identifies these tensions, as he outlines mitigation strategies in US college sport which minimise the racial inequities in leadership and coaching positions ‘by distorted discourses such as individuals lacking experience, reliability, or the intellectual capabilities to lead’ (2015, p.238). The consequences of this for addressing racisms are that it becomes a difficult task, as Van Dijk
notes; ‘when the dominant consensus is that there are no racisms, minority groups and their protests or other forms of resistance have a very hard time to be taken seriously’ (1992, p. 96). The direct and indirect strategies of denial that underpin this frame are argued to be premised upon the ‘personal experiences’ of White groups. It is argued that taking these avowals as evidence of the reduction in racisms, instead they should be expected in a society where racisms and their impacts are not experienced by the majority of White people (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

These frames serve as an interpretive medium through which to draw upon arguments that can be used to explain a variety of issues and phenomena relating to ‘race’ and racisms. The power of these frames to rationalise what CRT scholars would widely consider as racial discrimination with only abstract and intangible references to ‘race’ means that taken together they provide a secure yet fluid and interrelated wall that ‘protects’ White groups from the everyday racial realities in many western societies (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). These permit what is referred to as ‘tiptoeing’ around areas perceived as ‘racial minefields’ without fear of recrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Hylton, 2015). Taken together, these frames of colour-blind racism serve as efforts to rationalise racial inequality or disadvantage in society without clear reference to derogatory statements around the perceived inferiority of BAME groups. These frames will be drawn upon within this thesis, but next this chapter turns to explore the third tenet of CRT relevant to this thesis.

2.3.4 Commitment to social justice

The commitment to social justice embodied in a CRT approach reveals the theory’s political nature. A CRT paradigm involves a clear commitment to the pursuit of social justice for those groups who encounter oppression (Ortiz and Jani, 2010). In this sense, not only is it a theory that seeks to identify and map racisms, it is considered as a framework which adopts elements of liberation and emancipation (Bartlett and Brayboy, 2005). In this respect, Ortiz and Jani note that ‘CRT practitioners may move well beyond the tenets of modernistic theories to explore the role of social location and race, the dynamics of culture and the role it plays in explaining the etiology of problems’ (2010, p.183). On this score,
Gillborn argues that arguments about the likelihood of impartiality and objectivity in social research are very familiar, particularly in relation to ‘anti-racist’ research in which he notes colour-blind viewpoints often ‘masquerade as a concern for “objectivity” and “standards of evidence”’ (Gillborn, 2006, p. 22-23). To this end, CRT can be considered ideological in nature in its efforts to move beyond more objective ontologies and epistemologies commonly found in mainstream sociological theory to ensure issues of ‘race’ and racisms to stay at the centre of inquiry. Finally, it is argued that for social change to have any value in the face of permanent, embedded and colour-blind racisms, efforts towards deconstructing ‘race’ and dismantling racisms must be driven by intentions towards engendering social transformation (Hylton, 2009).

For theories rooted in transformational resistance to social inequality, Solórzano and Bernal argue that social justice must be both a process and an objective (2001). CRT’s clear commitment to social justice is established upon an awareness of the inequitable yet everyday practices and processes of social institutions. However, it is argued that this recognition of the ‘everydayness’ of racisms is often missing in the development of policy and services, which can often unwittingly reproduce inequality by failing to centralise ‘race’ and racisms in their development (Ortiz and Jani, 2010). As such, within the creation and implementation of policy designed to address ‘race’ and racisms in society and sport, a CRT informed approach views with suspicion ‘approaches to intervention that merely assist marginalized persons, families, groups, or communities to acquiesce to a racist structure’ even in spite of sound intentions (Ortiz and Jani, 2010, p.183).

Instead, Parker notes that CRT’s emphasis upon social justice within policy aligns itself with more radical and proactive methods of policy (1998). The centralisation of ‘race’ and racisms is deemed necessary in the development of policies which attempt to redistribute resources and outcomes (as opposed to opportunities) (1998). For example, considering the factors outlined in the frames of colour-blind racism, a commitment to social justice may involve employment practices that move away from equality of opportunity and meritocratic constraints to value diversity and inclusivity in workforces (Singer et al, 2010). Whilst these transformative processes and objectives may appear inequitable to some (White)
groups, a CRT perspective posits that social justice can only be realised if ahistorical and ‘meritocratic’ policies framed by equality of opportunity discourses are rejected (Hylton, 2009). As such, this commitment to social justice centralises the material differences between those privileged and those disadvantaged in racialised societies. In doing so, this approach works to identify strategies or policies which may ‘balance out’ this inequitable state of affairs and encourage a ‘colour-conscious’ ideology – rather than a colour-blind one (Hagerman, 2014).

Underpinning this commitment to social justice is a critical ontology on the part of CRT researchers which is conscious of the ways in which the experiences of BAME groups in society are often silenced. In order to develop and utilise this critical ontological perspective, CRT scholars are encouraged to seek out the often-invisible experiences of the racialised other who are disproportionately marginalised due to these processes (Hylton, 2009). On this note, this chapter now turns to explore the significance of the ‘marginalised voice’ to a CRT framework.

2.3.5 Centralisation of the marginalised voice

Delgado notes how few members of dominant racial groups have what W.E.B Du Bois refers to as a ‘double consciousness’, which broadly refers to the ways in which members of a particular racial group view themselves through the perspectives and ways of seeing the world of ‘the other’ (Delgado, 2001, Du Bois, 1965). Whilst this is argued to be an everyday reality for BAME groups whose experiences are framed by the normativity and centrality of the practices and processes of hegemonic Whiteness, Black argues that on the whole this is a single and one-way consciousness which is not mirrored in the everyday realities or thought processes of White groups (2007).

Consequently, the knowledge and experiences of BAME groups have often been excluded from dominant narratives within public and political life (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Also referred to as ‘master narratives’ or ‘majoritarian stories’ by some CRT scholars (Stanley, 2007; Sorlozano and Yosso, 2002; Love, 2004), these are characterised as a ‘script that specifies and controls’ how particular social processes are enacted and experienced (Stanley, 2007, p.14). More
specifically, these narratives and stories that have historically been grounded in White (and middle-class) superiority operate as a ‘description of events, accompanied by the values and beliefs that justify the actions taken by dominants to ensure their dominant position’ (Love, 2004, p. 228-229). The ultimate effect of which is to mask White privileges by making them appear ordinary, normal and natural (Love, 2004). Evidence of these narratives can readily be found in fields as diverse as education (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004; Solórzano and Yosso, 2001), law (Bell, 1987), crime and violence (Delgado, 1994), health (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001) and employment (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). These narratives often rest on ‘rational’ assumptions which lacks this double consciousness around the routine operations and mechanisms of society, and the way these are experienced by BAME groups. Consequently, in order to develop innovative and radial approaches to pursuits of social justice, CRT seeks to centralise the marginalised and often silenced voice of BAME groups, and in doing so work to dismantle taken for granted assumptions around issues of ‘race’ and racisms.

In centralising the marginalised voice, CRT scholars seek out ‘alternative’ narratives that are lived and negotiated counter to these prevailing master narratives or majoritarian stories (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002; Stanley, 2007). These counter stories are defined by Solórzano and Yosso as a ‘tool for exposing, analysing and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege’ (2002, p.32). As such, these stories provide voice to historically marginalised and silenced groups in order to ‘build a powerful challenge to “mainstream” assumptions’. (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p.27).

The pursuit and illumination of the marginalised voice chimes strongly with Delgado’s ‘call to context’, which Gillborn describes insists on the ‘significance of context and the detail of the lived experience of minoritized peoples as a defence against the colour-blind and sanitized analyses generated via universalistic discourses’ (2006, p.23). This call to context is deemed essential in order to appreciate and understand the full background to major disputes or issues within society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). For example, in Britain the continuing underrepresentation of BAME groups in senior occupational positions in arenas such as the labour market, housing and policing (UK Cabinet Office, 2018) has
often been explained by dominant (White) discourses through uncritical problematisations of BAME groups (Howarth, 2004). However, these issues may be reconsidered if contextual information generated through seeking out the marginalised voice exposed some of the institutionalised barriers faced by BAME groups in these areas (Hudson and Radu, 2011; Garner, 2011; Rowe and Ross, 2015). This ‘experiential knowledge’ within CRT-informed inquiry is thus deemed essential for ‘the theorising of ‘race’ within the context’ of BAME groups experiences of racisms (Lynn and Adams, 2002, p.88).

2.3.6 Whiteness

The final tenet of CRT drawn upon in this thesis is the theoretical concept of whiteness. To study ‘race’ and racisms, Singer argues that;

‘Any examination of race and racism [within a CRT framework] must begin with an understanding that whiteness has been positioned as the optimal status criterion in this society’ (2005, p.457)

The central premise of a critical analysis of whiteness is that although much academic attention concerning the construction of ‘racial’ traits and behaviours has been focussed on BAME groups, in reality all racial groups are racialised, and are subject to competing and overlapping forces of advantage and disadvantage (Frankenberg, 1993; Long and Hylton, 2002). It is important to note however that critiques of whiteness are not an attack on White people, rather critiques of whiteness are concerned with the implication of all White people in a system of racial domination that reinforces the power of White interests (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). For Garner, analysing whiteness is ‘an activist function’, which produces ‘knowledge for the liberation of White people from whiteness, so that the struggles of those not racialized as white can be better understood’ (2017, p.1584-1584). There are White individuals who recognise and work to dismantle some of the privileges they receive, whilst the operational power of whiteness does not preclude the existence of BAME individuals who – consciously or unconsciously – subscribe to dominant racial ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Notwithstanding these exceptions, Gillborn argues that;

‘All White-identified people are implicated in these relations, but they are
not all active in identical ways and they do not all draw similar benefits – but they do all benefit, whether they like it or not’ (Gillborn, 2008, p.34).

This quote alludes to a series of invisible and unearned privileges unavailable to racialised ‘others’ (Frankenberg, 1993; Jensen, 2005). This is referred to by Maynard as the ‘taken-for-granted everydayness of white privilege’ (1994, p.20). These ideas have been expanded upon in the work of other critical whiteness authors who consider the privileges that are attached to Whiteness, most notably McIntosh, who identifies 46 outcomes of privilege that she ascribes to her White identity (McIntosh, 1997). These outcomes of White privilege are referred to as an invisible knapsack of unearned assets which illustrate the nuanced yet damaging processes of racialised power relations in society (McIntosh, 1997).

These privileges are established on the powerful signification of whiteness as a ‘raceless’ and normalised identity, which occupies the ‘centre’ in society (Hylton, 2009). Through the ‘discourse of othering’ (Riggins, 1997), to be white is positioned as the norm in society; at the same time ‘raceless’ and central. The ‘other’ (BAME groups) on the other hand are ‘raced’ and peripheral – at once visible in their presence and invisible in their absence. As such, the discursive and definitional power of whiteness thus means that to be white is to be ‘inside’, included’ and ‘normal’ (Hylton, 2009). In this sense, whiteness can also be characterised by its invisibility – and the unnamed power this generates. Hartigan notes that ‘to be white then is a privilege many white people cannot ‘see’, resulting in their power to influence others in myriad settings, afforded by whiteness, to be unacknowledged’ (Hartigan, 1997, p.496). From this perspective, it is argued that to be white in many western societies is to be a ‘hidden majority’.

In this sense, the invisible and hegemonic power of whiteness creates the impression that racisms and racial inequality are external to white groups. As white people do not see themselves as ‘racial’ beings and ‘race’ comes to be synonymous with the ‘other’, there is often a dissonance between White groups and the complicit role they play in sustaining racial inequality in society. Whilst White groups may be compassionate or sympathetic towards inequality and inopportunity experienced by BAME groups, these topics are often perceived by White groups as ‘minority issues’. This is indicated by Frankenberg, who
expresses that racisms are regularly viewed as ‘an issue that people of color face and have to struggle with, but not as an issue that generally involves or implicates us’ (1993, p.6).

The ‘race’-neutrality embodied by White groups strongly aligns with a colour-blind ideology. The intertwining of colour-blindness and whiteness is articulated by Long and Hylton, who argue that;

‘We might have as our goal a ‘race’ blind society in which ‘race’ plays no part in determining opportunity, but while ‘race’ blindness posits whiteness as the norm that goal will be frustrated by the misapplication of its principles.’ (2002, p. 100)

In this sense, to embody colour-blindness is to reinforce the normativity and invisibility of whiteness. This is due to the normativity of whiteness and the belief that the experiences and values of white people can be universalised to explain the experiences of all ‘racial’ groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Long and Hylton, 2002). Long and Hylton describe how ‘the universalization of whiteness contributes to understanding white identity as it makes sense of ‘our’ news, ‘our’ television, important dates in ‘our’ calendar, and ‘our’ sport’ (2002, p. 89). The synchronicity between whiteness and colour-blindness is also indicated by Hartigan, who notes that ‘white people are beneficiaries of a host of seemingly neutral social arrangements and institutional operations, all of which seem to them at least to have no racial basis’ (1997, p.496).

As the processes and the privileges of whiteness are regularly invisible to White people, efforts to challenge racialised power imbalances and inequality are often met with deep resistance. This is because white individuals and groups struggle to see themselves as racial beings who benefit from a racially hierarchical social system (Hartigan, 1997). Consequently, those who do not see ‘race’ or recognise its significance are unlikely to notice racial discrimination (Wise, 2008). Even when equality and anti-racism measures are ‘embraced’ by white groups, Frankenberg notes White people may see antiracism work or initiatives as an ‘act of compassion for an “other”’ (1993, p.6) – and not measures that are linked to their lives and experiences. Many of these features of Whiteness are relevant to discussions on the application of CRT to sport, and it is to this area where this
2.4 CRT and sport

This use of CRT in this thesis is informed by theoretical and empirical scholarship which has illustrated the relevance and utility of a CRT framework for investigating ‘race’ and racisms within sport (Agyemang and DeLorme, 2010; Bradbury et al, 2018; Burdsey, 2011; Fletcher and Hylton, 2016; Hylton, 2009; Massao and Fasting, 2010; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Singer et al, 2010). Although CRT has predominantly been used within the fields of law and education, its transdisciplinary potential has been cited by authors who have demonstrated that sport represents a fertile ground for the development and utilisation of CRT frameworks (Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2005, 2008, 2009). For example, Hylton describes how sport is a ‘racially contested’ arena (2005, p. 92).

Whilst the diversity and inclusion that sport fosters and its highly visible commitments to anti-racism(s) mean it has popularly been labelled as racially harmonious, CRT is argued to be sceptical of areas of societies that claim to be open and equitable for all groups and individuals (Hylton, 2010). For although sport is widely accepted as a meritocratic and colour-blind arena in which there is a ‘level-playing’ field, it is considered by scholars to be a place where racial inequity is endemic, in which BAME groups are subject to individual, cultural and institutional forms of racisms (Bergerson, 2003; Hylton, 2005). In respect to this, a CRT lens is argued to be vital ‘if these complex and often subtle manifestations are to be mapped and subsequently challenged’ (Burdsey, 2011, p. 43).

The application of CRT to the specific field of sport coaching has been premised upon the homogeneous (White) coaching profiles of many teams, clubs and organisations across a number of professional sports. Thematically speaking, CRT has been utilised in these instances to expose the ways in which dominant ideologies and routinised practices have served to exclude BAME groups. For example, the work of Singer et al draws upon CRT’s critiques of Whiteness to identify the ways in which casual and informal recruitment practices in North American college sport reproduce the privilege that whites have historically held in senior leadership positions (2010). Whilst in Britain, the efficacy of CRT to the study of ‘race’ and racisms within sport coaching has been exemplified in the
work of Rankin-Wright et al (2016), who draw upon CRT’s critique of dominant liberal ideologies to illustrate how deeply embedded discourses of colour-blindness and equal opportunity within sport coaching organisations serve to problematise BAME coaches (2016). Within football coaching, the work of Bradbury et al has drawn upon similar theoretical themes, however this research has also engaged with the *methodological* principles of CRT by centralising the voices of BAME groups. This research ‘gave voice’ to often-silenced BAME coaches in order to investigate their experiences within men’s professional football coaching recruitment structures and workplaces (2018).

These themes present within the emerging body of CRT-informed research into ‘race’, racisms and sport demonstrate the utility and relevance of CRT to this thesis. This research seeks to take forward these theoretical and methodological features of CRT and draw upon them to make sense of equality measures designed to address patterns of racialised inequity.
3 Literature review: ‘race’, sport and coaching

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will draw on relevant literature to examine the relationship between race and sport. Firstly, this chapter will consider popular ideologies on the relationship between ‘race’ and sport. This will be followed by a discussion of prevailing academic understandings of the relationship between ‘race’ and sport, and the ways in which categories of ‘race’ and racisms are generated, reinforced and deconstructed in and through sport in the Western world. Secondly, this chapter will draw on relevant literature to examine relationship between ‘race’, sport and coaching. In doing so, this section will outline the representation of BAME coaches in a range of North American and British sporting settings, before drawing upon relevant empirical research to explore explanations for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in these environments. Thirdly, this chapter will draw on relevant literature to examine the relationship between ‘race’, football and coaching. In doing so, this section will draw on relevant academic literature to outline the representation of BAME coaches in professional football in Western European and English settings. This section will then draw upon relevant empirical research to explore explanations for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in these environments, with a particular focus on the men’s professional game in England.

3.2 ‘Race’, racisms and sport

Sport occupies a central place in popular culture and public and political life (Hylton, 2012). Despite the centrality of sport to the national consciousness, popularly sport is often considered as something that is distinct from the everyday realities of public and political life (Hylton, 2009). In this sense, sport is regularly framed as effectively existing in a social, political and cultural vacuum (Carrington, 2010; Hylton, 2009). The reinforcement and reproduction of these ideas through the organisation and practice of sport has served to create the impression that sport is an apolitical and neutral space (Hylton, 2009). These
perspectives have largely been underpinned by the notion that sporting contests and outcomes are structured upon meritocratic ideals of ‘naturalness’, ability and related discourses of superiority and inferiority (Rowe, 1995; Hylton, 2009).

These prevailing ideas around sport are present in popular sporting assumptions around ‘race’ and racisms (Hylton, 2009, 2012; Jarvie, 2003). Although not always, a popular ideology of sport has been to position it as a site of racial harmony (Hartmann, 2000). Wider patterns of discrimination in society which serve to restrict everyday experiences and occupational opportunities for different racial groups are popularly argued to be redundant within sporting practice. This is argued to be due to the modern, capitalist, liberal ideals of talent, hard-work and motivation which exist in sport that are believed to provide equal opportunities for all racial groups (Lusted, 2009; Hylton, 2009). In distinctly British settings, these popular narratives have been built on or supported by the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity that has characterised both sporting participation within amateur and professional settings and British sporting achievement in a range of national and international contexts (Jarvie, 2003). As Hylton notes, in Britain ‘Black people are regularly profiled in positions of success’ within sport (2012, p.30); a statement that also indicates the dominance of Black athletes amongst Britain’s BAME sporting ‘stars’. These apparent success stories have been offered as evidence of sport as an arena that is relatively free of racisms, where individuals of all racial identities can exercise their own agency to reach their full potential – providing they are in possession of the requisite qualities (Burdsey, 2011). The popular message promoted is ‘if people from one social group can succeed then so should others with similar life chances’ (Hylton, 2009, p. 32), as ethnic and cultural diversity in sport is framed as evidence as to the irrelevance of ‘race’ in professional sport (Burdsey, 2012). Taken together, these patterns are argued to support popular ‘majoritarian’ stories of sport as a site of ‘equality, inclusion and ‘melting pot’ idealism’ (Hylton, 2012, p. 30).

However, it has been argued that such perceptions oversimplify the position that sport occupies within contemporary, racially hierarchical societies (Carrington, 2001; Jarvie; 2003, Hylton, 2012). A number of authors have argued that sport does not reside in a ‘race’-neutral vacuum, instead it can be considered ‘an arena in which the complex interplay between ethnicity, ‘race’, nation, culture and
identity in different social environments is most publicly articulated’ (Ansari, 2004, p. 209). In this respect, a number of authors have argued that sport is a site in which broader societal patterns and norms influence the sporting experiences of different racialised groups (Andersson, 2003, 2007; Hallinan et al., 1999; Hartmann, 2000; Hylton, 2009; James, 2005; Krouwel et al., 2006; Lovell, 1991; Lunde, 2006). This however is not to portray sport as merely a passive recipient of societal ideals and beliefs and a reproducer of racial ideologies and meaning. Rather, these authors contend that sport serves as both a product and a producer of broader racial meaning in social and political life (Collins, 1998). In this sense, authors have argued that sport is a ‘racial formation’; this is defined by Omi and Winant as ‘the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed’ (Omi and Winant, 2004, p. 124). This conceptualisation recognises that racisms are a complex process and need to be understood as ‘historically situated, operating dynamically at any level of society, and therefore inevitably sport’ (Hylton, 2010, p. 340). As part of a racial formation, Hylton notes the existence of ‘racial projects’ in sport; processes of ‘race’ ‘logic’ that ‘organize resources along racial lines in seemingly ‘natural’ ways’ (2010, p. 340). Long and Hylton exemplify a racial project in their identification of the ‘contradictory’ inclusion of Black players across a number of sports yet their exclusion from administration and management roles (2002).

Popular beliefs on the neutrality of sport have been conjoined by a common belief that racisms in many aspects of the organisation and practice of sport have dissipated. This is argued to have framed the decreasing regularity of expressions of crude, biological and intentional racisms in previous decades as evidence as to the absence of racisms in contemporary sporting practice and contests (Burdsey, 2012). This however has been argued to be premised on the conceptualisation of a readily identifiable, intentional and singular racism. It has been argued that perceptions of an isolated and episodic racism ‘over-simplify its contents and posit that its “presence” or “absence” can be straightforwardly and unequivocally established’ (Burdsey, 2010, p.278). In this regard, Hylton and Lawrence note that ‘current sporting structures often fail to comprehend racism beyond the vernacular and thus are ill-equipped to address sufficiently the complexities of racism’ (2016, p. 2742). It is argued that racisms in sport instead
represent something far more complex than oversimplified racist/non-racist binaries, where it’s “presence” or “absence” can be straightforwardly and unequivocally established" (Burdsey, 2009, p. 278). Sociological inquiry into the insidious existence of institutionalised and occupational racisms has served to ‘confound the notion that racism has simply disappeared because it is less overtly egregious than two or three decades ago’ (Hylton and Lawrence, 2016, p. 2743). Instead, it is argued that racial inequality and discrimination remain entrenched, and that any reductions of more blatant and crude forms of racisms is not indicative of the growing irrelevance of racisms in sport (Burdsey, 2011). On this score, Fasting and Massao note that within sport it remains the case ‘that racist accusations should be followed by identifying a specific individual or an institution as a direct victim or offender’ (2010, p.149). It has been suggested that the preoccupation with intention that frames the identification and responses to racisms means that more subtle and engrained forms of racisms have largely gone unchallenged (Burdsey, 2012; Gullestad, 2006).

A number of authors have claimed that racisms are institutionalized in British sport (Burdsey, 2011; 2012; Hylton, 2009; Long et al, 2005; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Work examining the existence of institutional racism in sport has examined the different ways in which the organisation and practice of sport are experienced by different racial groups. This has considered a lack of provision, access, capital (social, cultural, and economic), and role models amongst a number of commonly overlooked yet normalised racialised factors that impede or disrupt participation in different sporting spheres for BAME groups (Bradbury et al, 2018; Burdsey, 2011; Hylton and Lawrence, 2016; Ratna et al, 2016). These ‘business-as-usual’ forms of racisms are argued to not be external or episodic to sport, but instead embedded in the normative and everyday operations of sporting practice and organisation, and evident in different ways across different tiers of sports. For example, Kilvington has identified the cultural essentialisation of South Asian groups in an analysis of the underrepresentation of professional football players of South Asian heritage in the English men’s game. This research identified the existence of a number of racialised processes of exclusion regarding participatory opportunities and beyond (Kilvington, 2012; Kilvington and Price, 2013). Similar work has also exposed how these racialised
processes have worked to protect the White hegemony and privilege present within the leadership and governance of sport in Britain. For example, Hylton and Lawrence argue how;

‘Off-field social rituals, the historical legacy of racial inequalities, failures in practice and policy and racialized intolerance converge to create conditions, across various sports, whereby white, able-bodied, middle-class, heterosexual men are disproportionally advantaged to obtain and maintain status as players, coaches, and administrators’ (2016, p. 2742).

The relationship between sport and racisms can be considered paradoxical, as Hylton notes that ‘where we experience sport there is always the potential for racism and its resistance’ (2010, p. 337). On this score, Carrington notes that sport can be a site of popular resistance, whereby particular forms of racisms have been effectively challenged through revealing and exposing the racialised power imbalances that exist (2012). These ideas are expanded upon by Messner, who draws upon Gramscian ideas to argue that marginalised groups are able to;

‘Use sport as a means to resist (at least symbolically) the domination imposed upon them. Sport must thus be viewed as an institution through which domination is not only imposed, but also contested; an institution in which power is constantly at play’ (1992, p.13).

In this sense, sport has served as a place to challenge common-sense and taken for granted forms of ‘racial absolutism and national belonging’ (Carrington, 2012, p. 963). It has been argued that sport represents a unique and ‘particularly useful site for exploring the changing nature of ‘patterns of prejudice’ in societies around the world’ (Ansari, 2004, p.209). The seminal work of C.L.R James provides a particularly instructive and illustrative example in this regard. *Beyond the Boundary* (James, 1993) reveals the essential relationship between ‘culture, and in particular cricket, politics and Black resistance in the anticolonial struggles of the time’ (Carrington, 1998, p.281). This work identified sport as a site of reproduction and resistance of prevailing ideas around ‘race’ and culture and established how sporting contests and practice could be central to shape a sense of (West-Indian) identity at a time when the region was under British colonial rule.
This work was instructive in exemplifying the power imbalances and forms of hegemony inherent to sport. Moreover, by challenging Marxist views of sport as simply a diversion from ‘real’ societal problems, the work of James established the idea that sport is ‘a profoundly contested and therefore political space’ (Carrington, 2013, p.381). This work challenges popular myths of sport as a site of ‘dichotomous racist/not racist interpretations’ which struggle to fully interpret the structural and interactional complexities that are inherent to sporting organisation and practice (Burdsey, 2009, p. 278). Instead, sport’s site as place of resistance to and reproduction of dominant ideas on ‘race’ means sport can instead be considered a ‘complex and inherently contradictory cultural arena that simultaneously serves to both challenge and confirm racial ideologies’ (Carrington and McDonald, 2002, p. 3).

Other sports have been simultaneous sites of resistance and reproduction of racialised power imbalances. For example, the work of Collins has provided critical insights into the contradictory positions of sports in Britain which are home to extremely diverse playing populations yet at coaching, management and organisational tiers are typified by a hegemonic White masculinity (Collins, 1998). In exploring manifestations and expressions of ‘race’ and class in the historically White, working-class sport of rugby league, despite seemingly progressive histories and patterns of ‘on-field’ integration this work questions the extent to which sports are able to transcend and disentangle from the ‘underlying assumptions of British society’ (Collins, 1998, p. 152). Despite having a long history of Black representation, this work juxtaposes diversity on and off the field to illustrate the contradictory ways in which Black players could be welcomed into the elite levels of the sport, yet at the same time be subject to racial profiling and crude stereotyping which excluded their participation in any elements of the sport beyond the field of play (Collins, 1998).

3.3 ‘Race’, sport and coaching

3.3.1 Representation of BAME coaches in sport

Research undertaken in a range of national and international contexts have found that BAME groups are largely underrepresented in coaching positions in professional sport (Bradbury, 2013; Bradbury et al 2011, 2018; Burdsey, 2007;
Cunningham, 2010; King, 2004; Lambourne & Higginson, 2006; Long et al., 2009; North, 2009; Sporting Equals, 2011; Sports Coach UK, 2011; Sports People’s Think Tank, 2014). Annual data compiled in North America by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) has reported on the historical and continuing underrepresentation of coaches of colour (terminology adopted in this body of research/national context) in the major US sport franchises, such as the National Basketball Association, the National Football League (NFL), and Major League Baseball (MLB) (Lapchick, 2018). For example, in the NBA at the start of the 2018-2019 season, 33% NBA teams had head coaches of colour, whilst 42% of teams had assistant head coaches of colour. This represents the highest representation of coaches of colour in the major US sports, however this still signifies an underrepresentation of coaches of colour in comparison to the NBA playing population of 82% who are of colour (ESPN, 2019). In the NFL, at the end of the 2018 season 12.5% of teams had head coaches of colour, which is half of the league’s highest ever representation of 25% of teams being coached by a person of colour (ESPN, 2019). These figures signify an underrepresentation at this coaching level in comparison to the NFL playing population of 70% who are of colour (ESPN, 2019). In the MLB, 13% of teams have a manager of colour (club managers in the MLB are responsible for team strategy and leadership) (ESPN, 2018). This is lower than the league’s highest ever representation of 30% (EPSN, 2018). These figures signify an underrepresentation in comparison to the 43% of players in the MLB who are of colour (ESPN, 2018). In addition, recent research notes that within the US National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (university and college level sport competitions), coaches of colour are significantly underrepresented in head coach and assistant coaching positions (Cunningham, 2010; De Hass, 2007; TIDES, 2018). Amongst Division I (the elite level of the NCAA) men’s teams, 14% of head coaches are people of colour however 34% percent of male athletes are of colour (ESPN, 2019). This underrepresentation is similarly significant in Division I women’s teams, where 15% percent of coaches are people of colour yet 44% of female athletes are of colour (ESPN, 2019).

Research has also noted that in instances when BAME coaches are in positions of employment they are often disproportionately employed in less senior
coaching positions (Cunningham, 2012; Bozeman and Fay, 2013; DeHass 2007). These patterns of occupational segregation are described as occurring when ‘individuals of various racial/ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately represented in various occupational groupings’ (Cokley, Dreher and Stockdale, 2004). This skewing of BAME representation in coaching positions draw similarities with processes of stacking in sport, which consist of the disproportionate distribution of BAME athletes to non-central, peripheral playing positions (Margolis and Piliavin 1999; Sack et al. 2005; Smith and Jeff, 1989). Taken together these patterns indicate that in a broad range of sports and geographical locations, elite level coaching is a profession that is largely White (and male) in its composition. This is particularly the case in more senior coaching and leadership roles, where White people occupy the overwhelming majority of positions.

In Britain, Sports Coach UK has identified a widespread lack of BAME coaches across all sports (in amateur and professional settings). When compared to the UK adult population in which 86% self-identify as ‘White’ and 14% self-identify as a BAME group (ONS, 2011), these studies identified that 99% of qualified coaches in British sport reported themselves to be White whilst 1% reported themselves to be BAME (North 2009; Sports Coach UK, 2011). These patterns exist despite largely similar participation rates between BAME groups and White groups in grassroots sport and exercise in Britain (Sporting Equals, 2011, 2014).

3.3.2 Explanations for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in sport

The majority of empirical research into the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in professional sport and related issues surrounding the management of diversity and inclusivity has taken place in North America, and has sought to develop a practical and theoretical understanding of the reasons for the underrepresentation of people of colour (Agyemang and DeLorme, 2010; Cunningham, 2010; Lapchick, 2018; Regan and Cunningham, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005; Sanderson, 2010; Schinke et al., 2008; Singer et al., 2005; Wilson et al., 2007). This body of research has noted a range of explanations for the underrepresentation of minority ethnic coaches. These explanations
comprise individual and motivational factors to structural conditions and institutionalised practices which restrict the opportunities for minority ethnic coaches to; access coach employment, progress through professional organisational environments and experience fair and equitable treatment within coach employment (Cunningham, 2010; Cunningham et al., 2006; Cunningham & Sagas, 2004, 2007; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005; Kamphoff; 2013; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008).

On this score, Cunningham identifies access and treatment discrimination experienced by marginalised groups in pursuing a successful coaching career (Cunningham, 2010; Greenhaus et al, 1990; Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Access discrimination ‘denies admittance to an organization on the basis of membership within particular group’ (Sartore and Cunningham, 2006, p. 71), and serves to prevents members of marginalised groups from entering a job, organization, or profession (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Access discrimination occurs at the time when a position is filled and includes but is not limited to the rejection of applications or the limited advertisement of roles (Cunningham and Sagas, 2005). These barriers to accessing coach employment have been noted in a number of European and North American contexts (Bradbury et al, 2018; Cunningham, 2010; Cunningham and Sagas, 2005; Singer et al, 2010).

One of the most significant themes to emerge as a barrier to employment across transatlantic contexts concerns the ways in which sports organisations and clubs recruit coaching staff. Outside of sport, many areas of industry have been identified as employing formal four-step models of recruitment, comprised of a sequence of; job advertisement, candidate applications, interviewing of shortlisted candidates, selection of candidate(s) (Marsden and Campbell, 1990; Marsden and Gorman, 2001). An approach that has been considered to offer a range of performance, interpersonal and financial benefits (Carroll et al, 1999; Williamson and Robinson, 2008). In a range of professional sporting settings however, recruitment processes through which coaches are appointed have been argued to be ‘informal, closed and lacking transparency’ (Fletcher et al, 2014, p. 3). Recruitment methods have been conceptualised as networks-based which operate on a culture of ‘who you know’ as opposed to ‘what you know’. (Norman et al, 2014; Shropshire, 1996; Singer et al, 2005). Citing the work of Shropshire
(1996), Singer et al neatly summarise what has been termed an ‘old boys’ network’ (Shropshire, 1996);

‘A system of social networking among white males in the sport business industry that limits and inhibits the ability of racial minorities to gain access to those positions of power that have been historically (and continue to be) held by white males’ (Singer et al, 2005, p. 273)

It is argued that the often unearned, invisible and unconscious privileges these systems generate for White coaches serves to exclude and marginalise many BAME coaches from new opportunities (Fletcher et al, 2014). These systems align strongly with research on the role of social capital in sport, which notes the unequal distribution of social capital along racial lines and the subsequent ways this serves to reinforce racialised inequality (Hylton, 2009; Field, 2003). Field notes that these powerful networks in sport promote inequality due to their restrictive access to the means of accruing social capital through association (2003). It has been identified that employment opportunities largely tend to be reserved for coaches with personal and professional connections to those senior decision-makers in sports organisations who oversee recruitment processes and decisions; a process believed to sustain a homogenous workforce (Fletcher et al, 2014; Piggott, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005). US-based research has termed the outcome of these recruitment methods as ‘homologous reproduction’, which broadly refers to ‘hiring and promoting workers that appear similar to decision-makers’ (Sartore and Cunningham, 2005, p. 73). As such, these recruitment methods have been identified as a form of social closure, in the way that the dominance of White coaches is reinforced through the preferential hiring of other White coaches (Sagas and Cunningham, 2005). In British settings these patterns have been identified in research which has noted the presence of an ‘informal, closed and unclear coaching appointment process’ within National Governing Bodies (NGBs) (Norman et al, 2014, p. 42). Here, coaching employment opportunities are argued to be premised upon racialised ‘inner circles’ and ‘networks’ that effectively reserved new employment opportunities for those (predominantly White) coaches who invariably occupy central positions within NGBs (Norman et al, 2014, p.42).
These processes of social closure are also contended to be reinforced by the short time frames in which sporting organisations conduct recruitment processes. For example, Singer et al. identify the impacts of the ‘short window of time’ in which many US colleges fill their head coaching vacancies (2010, p. 285). These limited time frames are argued to significantly restrict opportunities for decision-makers to ‘seek out, identify and interview a diverse pool of head coaching candidates that includes racial minorities’, positioned on the ‘outside’ of these dominant social and cultural networks (2010, p. 285). Whilst the speed of hiring decisions has often been considered a ‘natural’ feature of modern, capitalist and highly competitive elite sport settings, the absence of a reasonable time frame in which to conduct coach recruitment is contended to generate ‘unfair outcomes, as quick hiring decisions limit and inhibit the ability of racial minorities to gain genuine opportunities to engage in the interview process, and potentially earn head coach positions’ (Singer et al, 2010, p. 286). That this is such an embedded, everyday practice in some professional sporting arenas indicates the centrality and invisibility of forms of institutionalised racisms in professional sport coaching (Singer et al, 2010).

In British settings, research into the underrepresentation and experiences of BAME coaches has similarly noted the existence of a range of distinct yet interrelated factors which work collectively to restrict opportunities for access into professional coach employment positions (Norman et al, 2014; Fletcher et al, 2014). This isn’t to say that there exists a singular BAME experience within coaching workplaces in professional sport in Britain – as is also the case in North American contexts. Indeed, Burdsey usefully highlights the different individual and structural conditions which impact on different BAME groups – particularly the contrasting ‘levels of access’ achieved between British Asian and African-Caribbean groups in professional sport coaching (2004).

Key constraints include the cost of coaching courses required to initially enter professional coaching environments and then subsequently advance to higher level coaching positions of increased responsibility (Norman et al, 2014; Fletcher et al, 2014). This has been noted to limit the possibilities for coaches to get a ‘foot in the door’, and to have a detrimental effect on the aspirations of BAME coaches (Norman et al, 2014). Relatedly, an absence of role models has been cited as a
central motivational or demotivational factor for BAME coaches to seek a career in professional coaching (Cunningham, 2010; Kamphoff; 2013; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Norman et al, 2014). On this score, Fletcher et al’s research on the experiences of South Asian coaches in English and Welsh cricket identify the ‘pull’ factor of role models, who ‘play an important part in recruiting and sustaining the influence of South Asians in coaching’, particularly and significantly in relation to the influence of role models on younger people (2014, p. 28). The confidence to pursue a coaching career is felt to be increased when coaches are able to picture themselves in ethnically and culturally diverse coaching workforces (Sports Coach UK, 2014).

A number of authors have also identified the existence of treatment discrimination within elite coaching environments, which is considered to take place when ‘subgroup members receive fewer rewards, resources, or opportunities on the job than they legitimately deserve on the basis of job-related criteria’ (Greenhaus et al., 1990, p.64-65). In North American contexts, treatment discrimination has been found to exist in settings where African American assistant head coaches are often valued more for their ability to hire and ‘relate’ to players (often also African American), rather than for their coaching skills and experiences (Brown, 2002). This is argued to have ‘grounded’ African American coaches in more junior positions with lower levels of decision-making responsibilities. Other research has noted the ‘differential treatment of and adjustable standards applied to’ African American coaches within coach employment spheres (Cunningham, 2010, p. 401). Here, research has noted the impacts of the White hegemony and racialised power imbalances present in senior coaching hierarchies. For example, Wojciechowski notes how the ‘failures’ of African American coaches in sport have been used as an excuse to not hire or promote African Americans to positions of greater seniority (2008). This is argued to represent treatment discrimination in the ways that opportunities are denied to marginalised groups based on perceived ‘race’-related criteria, as opposed to job-related criteria. Despite these processes, research in the US suggests that African American coaches have significantly outperformed White coaches in a number of sports, particularly the NFL (Madden, 2004; Madden and Ruther, 2009). These forms of treatment discrimination are argued to produce unfair outcomes for BAME
coaches in respect to failing to secure a position for which one is qualified, failure to further advance one’s coaching career, and disproportionate pay compared to similarly qualified White counterparts (Cunningham, 2010; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Maume, 1999).

A significant barrier which may be classified as both a form of access and treatment discrimination is the presence of prejudice and stereotypes amongst senior coaching hierarchies. On this score, the ‘manager as white’ typology alludes to stereotypical beliefs about BAME and White coaches that have positioned whiteness as the institutional norm within the sports coaching profession (Tomkiewicz, 1998). Stereotypical beliefs about BAME groups have been noted which are ‘inconsistent with the characteristics believed necessary to successfully fulfil a managerial role’ (Sartore and Cunningham, 2006, p. 70). Prevailing stereotypes have been identified in regards to the ‘innate’ physical superiority and intellectual inferiority of African BAME athletes compared to white counterparts (Entine, 2000; Harrison, 2001; Harrison, Azzarito, & Burden, 2004; Sailes, 2000). Some of these beliefs have been identified in the racial phenomena of stacking, whereby there was found to be a disproportionate representation of Black groups in positions commonly associated with qualities of strength and speed, rather than those positions seen to be requiring intelligence and acute analytical skills (Bivens and Leonard II, 1994; Carrington and McDonald, 2002; Maguire, 1988; Melnick, 1988; Sack et al, 2005; Stebbins, 1993). Although the prominence of these patterns has somewhat subsided, the residual effects of stacking have been noted in coaching spheres where stereotypical beliefs about the intelligence of White groups have been noted to be highly consistent with managerial characteristics (Chung-Herrera and Lankau, 2005; Sartore and Cunningham, 2006). This is argued to have positioned ethnic minority coaches in these contexts as a risk as they are seen to be better suited to playing roles than they are coaching roles (Anderson, 1993; Rosette et al., 2008). Taken together, these findings are argued to demonstrate the presence of significant barriers which exclude BAME coaches from entering and progressing to higher-level coaching and managerial positions (Kerr, Miller & Reid, 2002; Maume, 1999).

Despite the historical and continued existence of racialised barriers impacting on
BAME coaches in the coaching labour market, the notion that racisms do not influence coaching arena continues to be a strong belief amongst senior power brokers and decision makers in sport organisations and clubs (Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2009; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Singer et al, 2005). The broad, yet not total, absence of explicit, crude and biological racisms in many coaching settings coupled with strong and deeply engrained narratives of equality and diversity are contended to support the illusion that racial imbalances in representation in professional coach employment in sport are inherently ‘natural’ and fair outcomes of existing recruitment practices (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). This has been found to be premised upon a strict adherence to colour-blind and meritocratic ideals amongst senior sport organisation decision-makers which has strengthened discourses of denial around ‘race’ in professional coaching settings (Singer et al, 2005). These narratives have thus attempted to explain imbalances in coaching representation between White and BAME groups as ‘anything but racism’; symptomatic of broader post-racial beliefs which have heralded the successful conquering of ‘race’ and racisms in sport (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Glover, 2007; Singer et al, 2005; Rankin-Wright, 2016). Rather, the presence of these ‘race’-neutral ideologies have been argued to allow these racialised processes and practices to operate undisrupted (Burdsey, 2011).

On this score, research has noted concerted efforts amongst organisational hierarchies to minimise and deny the salience of ‘race’ as a determinant in coach recruitment decisions and workplace environments (Sanderson, 2010; Singer et al, 2005). To this end, colour-blind discourses and avoidance strategies have been noted by some authors in attitudes towards ‘race’ equality and diversity amongst equality leads in British sport organisations (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). This work has sought to make links between attitudes towards ‘race’ within coaching workforces and broader attitudes around diversity and inclusion in sport (Norman et al, 2014; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). It is to a more detailed analysis of the levels of representation and racialised experiences of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England to which this chapter now turns.

3.4 ‘Race’, football and coaching

3.4.1 Representation of BAME coaches in football
Similar patterns of representation and racialised experiences as above have been identified within professional football in Western Europe. Extremely diverse participation at the elite level of the game has not been found to be reflected in leadership and organisational tiers beyond the playing field (Bradbury et al, 2014 2018; Cashmore and Cleland, 2011; SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). For example, transnational research has noted the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in major European professional football leagues (England, Germany, Spain, Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands) and national team coaching workforces, with a sample of these settings indicating coaching workforces that are overwhelmingly White (and male). For example, this research suggested that at men’s elite level clubs in Western Europe, 96.6% of senior coaches were White men (Bradbury et al, 2014). At the men’s national team level, homogeneity was even more pronounced with 99.6% of all senior coaches being White men (Bradbury et al, 2014). Whilst at the women’s national team level, 100% of coaches were found to be White men or White women (Bradbury et al, 2014). Taken together, this research reported that 98.8% of all senior coaching positions at men’s elite level clubs, and men’s and women’s national teams were occupied by White people, and that ‘visible’ minorities (all of which were men) represented just 1.2% of all senior coaching positions at this level (Bradbury et al, 2014). Some of Western Europe’s most diverse countries of France, the Netherlands and England are where this research has focussed in most detail. Here, the overall level of representation of ‘visible’ minority coaches across professional was found to be around 2-5%. This is a figure that compares unfavourably with the representation of ‘visible’ minorities within national populations (between 11-15%) and as professional players (between 25-40%) in these countries (Bradbury et al, 2014).

In England, recent research has identified that the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football stands at 4.6% (SPTT, 2017). This is a figure that compares unfavourably with the representation of BAME players in men’s professional football in England (around 30%), and the representation of BAME groups in the population of Britain (14%) (SPTT, 2017). The representation of BAME coaches in the game has been relatively stagnant for a sustained period of years, notwithstanding some anomalous spikes that have largely owed to the
hiring and re-hiring of a small but established core of relatively high profile BAME first-team managers and their support staff within football’s extremely fluid job market (Cashmore and Cleland, 2011; SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Regarding specific positions at the first-team level, research indicates that BAME coaches and managers are significantly underrepresented in the most senior positions. For example, research suggests that the representation of BAME first-team managers and first-team assistant managers stands at 3.3%, whilst BAME first-team coaches represent 6.2% of these positions (SPTT, 2017). Similar patterns have been identified at the professional club youth academy level. In the most senior position of academy manager/director, 3.4% of all positions are held by BAME managers. In senior ‘on the grass’ coaching roles, BAME coaches account for 5.7% of all professional development squad lead coaches, whilst 7% of all senior professional development squad lead coaches are from a BAME background (SPTT, 2017). In addition to these figures, there is a small but significant number of BAME coaches employed in full-time or part-time coaching support roles in professional club youth academies (SPTT, 2017). This may partly be a result of the greater number of coaching roles within youth academy football, however it is also worth noting that youth academy coaching roles generally are lower-paid and less senior than first-team roles. As such, these patterns may indicate occupational segregation in the representation of BAME coaches in men’s English professional football in the broad increased proportion of BAME coaches in support staff and professional club youth academy positions (Cunningham, 2012).

3.4.2 Explanations for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in professional football

Empirical research undertaken to attempt to explain these patterns of representation has sought to centralise the experiences of BAME coaches. On this score, the work of Bradbury et al presents an in-depth qualitative analysis of the key structural and cultural factors experienced by BAME coaches in transitioning from a playing career (Bradbury et al, 2014, 2018). Bradbury et al suggest that the realisation of an increased representation of BAME groups in the coaching workforce of men’s English professional football is partially dependent upon;
'The successful negotiation of a series of key institutional barriers which have thus far limited the scope and pace of transition from playing to coaching for many BME coaches' (2018, p. 14)

These key barriers identified by Bradbury et al are argued to result from the taken for granted and normative ‘ways of doing things’ within professional sport. These everyday practices of recruitment and employment are typically presented as relatively harmless and may often be unconscious and unintentional, however it is argued their collective operation constitutes a form of institutional racism that ‘militates against the recruitment of minorities in favour of ‘preferred’ White candidates with similarly perceived norms, values and behaviours’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p.317). Consequently, it is argued that BAME coaches are faced with a ‘glass ceiling’ (Bradbury et al, 2014). Similar to the previously outlined access and treatment discrimination experienced by BAME coaches within other sporting contexts, Bradbury et al outlines a number of overarching constraining factors which have informed the experiences and representation of BAME coaches.

Firstly, to secure coach employment within men’s English professional football, prospective coaches are required to undertake coach education in order to achieve the necessary qualifications. Recent figures on the levels of BAME groups within coach education suggests that BAME coaches are underrepresented in this arena (SPTT, 2015). For example, BAME coaches accounted for 8.8% of all coaches undertaking the FA UEFA B licence, the minimum qualification required to work in a professional club youth academy (SPTT, 2015). The FA UEFA A licence, which is necessary in order to work in senior academy coaching positions and some first-team coaching positions, had 7% of participants from a BAME background (SPTT, 2015). Whilst BAME coaches accounted for 7.7% of all participants undertaking the FA UEFA Pro licence, which is required in order to hold first-team managerial positions (SPTT, 2015). Whilst these figures indicate that a number of BAME coaches who have successfully entered and progressed through coach education pathways, research has reported on negative experiences in respect to accessing and undertaking high level coach education courses which has underpinned both the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in coach education and coach employment (Bradbury et al, 2014, 2018). Regarding access to coach education
courses, the ‘peripheral’ position occupied by BAME coaches in the game are argued to have ‘limited opportunities for identification, selection, mentoring and financial support to access and complete high-level coach education courses’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p.320). It is argued that this is particularly the case for BAME coaches with limited previous experience of playing or coaching at the elite level of professional football, for whom associated professional football capital is limited. The presence of these ‘accessibility filters’ are contended to negatively impact on the abilities of some BAME coaches to successfully complete high-level coaching awards (Bradbury et al, 2018, p. 320).

Within high level coach education courses, the presence of intentional and unintentional racisms is argued to socially, culturally and professionally marginalise BAME coaches within the professional football coaching arena (Bradbury et al, 2018). Although more overt instances of racisms are argued to be a less frequent, the expression of more nuanced forms of racisms amongst White coach educators or coaches are argued to negatively impact upon the motivations and aspirations of BAME coaches (Bradbury et al, 2018). As part of this, the failure of White coaches and colleagues to challenge ‘racialized micro-aggressions’ within coach education settings is argued to discourage continued engagement in the coach education process on the part of BAME coaches (Bradbury et al, 2018; King, 2004). Micro-aggressions are argued to be “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group” (Sue et al, 2007, p. 23 in Burdsey, 2011). They are argued to often be ‘subtle and unconscious’, and may occasionally manifest themselves in ‘gestures, looks, or tones’ (Burdsey, 2011, p. 268). Micro-aggressions are claimed to be so prevalent that they are often brushed off by members of the dominant group as inconsequential and innocuous (Burdsey, 2011). This is recognised in high level coach education settings by authors who identify the expectation for BAME coaches to ignore these subtle forms of racisms and racialised ‘banter’ from White coaches and colleagues (Bradbury et al, 2018; King, 2004). These nuanced forms of racisms have also been identified in the tendency of White coach educators to view BAME coaches with ‘suspicion’, and the different interactions between white coaches and BAME coaches with White coach educators (Bradbury et al, 2018). Such racially inequitable treatment is
argued to be underpinned by a ‘series of deeply embedded and misplaced cultural stereotypes regarding the (poor) attitude and (limited) aptitude of minority coaches’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p. 321).

In this sense, high level coach education environments have been conceptualised as inherently ‘White’ (and masculine) spaces (King, 2004). The work of King has framed these settings as places where white men have ‘colonised’ courses through the implicit imposition of white codes of behaviour (2004). The development, delivery and adjudication of these courses by white men has been argued to creates a ‘legacy of being at home’ for white coaches, which reinforces both the invisibility of whiteness in these settings and serves to alienate BAME coaches as the ‘racial other’ (2004, p. 31). It is argued that the extent to which BAME coaches can successfully negotiate these elite coaching environments hinge upon their development of a ‘cultural passport’ (Back, Crabbe and Solomos, 1998). These socio-culturally defined performative behaviours are argued to operate as entry tickets for BAME groups into predominantly White domains (King, 2004). The development of these cultural passports is argued to be premised on the extent to which BAME coaches ‘shed’ aspects of their ‘Blackness’ or ‘Asianness’, as part of a strategy to adhere to normative (White) behaviours. This is argued to enable BAME groups to better ‘fit’ high level coach education environments; even if this means at least a partial erasure of the cultural identities specific to BAME individuals or groups (King, 2004).

Beyond coach education, the recruitment structures in European and English contexts have been argued to be characterised by networks-based methods of recruitment. These are cited to create a culture of ‘it’s not what you know, it’s who you know’ (Bradbury et al, 2014). The recruitment of coaches in the professional game is described by Bradbury et al as a set of processes which are based upon ‘personal recommendation, patronage and sponsored mobility’ (p. 16). Whilst it is noted that there exists a small group of established BAME coaches in the professional game who have successfully negotiated these normative recruitment practices, on the whole these networks are conceptualised as maintaining a cycle of BAME exclusion within coach employment. Bradbury et al states that these ‘insider’ networks are premised upon prevailing social and
cultural discourses; which privilege whiteness at the same time they marginalise BAME groups (2014). This is argued to be evident in the heightened levels of social capital possessed by White coaches in the game, and the stronger relationships developed between White coaches and colleagues over the football life-course (Bradbury et al, 2018). Further, these processes are argued to be evident in the gravitation of key-decision makers such as directors and owners towards ‘preferred’ or white candidates. In this sense, these processes lead to homologous reproduction in the way that they privilege those coaches that appear similar to club decision-makers (Sartore and Cunningham, 2005; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005). On this score, Bradbury identifies how these patterns serve to exclude marginalised BAME coaches;

‘The frequency with which large numbers of White coaches move between coaching positions at different clubs whilst opportunities for BAME coaches remain numerically limited’ (p. 16)

White coaches are thus argued to be the visible majority in men’s English professional coaching. These ‘known’ coaches are at an increased likelihood of securing employment – even when similarly, or under, qualified in contrast to BAME coaches – as they come to occupy central positions in the consciousness of club owners and decision makers (Bradbury et al, 2018).

In men’s professional football in England there has also been identified the continued existence of racisms and stereotypes within professional coaching workplaces. Whilst explicit, crude and intentional racisms are contended to be a relatively rare occurrence in the game, several authors have reports on the continuing presence of nuanced, unconscious and codified racisms in professional coaching environments (Bains and Johal, 1998; Bradbury et al, 2014, 2018; Burdsey, 2004 Kilvington and Price, 2013). These are argued to be rooted in ‘a series of misplaced historical conceptions regarding the naturalness of ‘race’ and perceived inevitability of cultural inclination’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p. 323). As with US-based research which has identified the harmful effects of physical stereotypes around BAME groups in sport (Chung-Herrera and Lankau, 2005; Sartore and Cunningham, 2006), BAME coaches are reported to have been conceptualised by key club power brokers in regards to their perceived
superior physical traits of inherent ‘strength, athleticism and instinct’, whilst at the same time minimising their relevant intellectual, logical and organizational abilities (Bradbury et al, 2018, p.323). In this sense, it is argued that a number of BAME coaches have been negatively conceptualised by senior club power brokers ‘in terms of their perceived ethnic and cultural traits rather than in terms of their qualifications, experience and abilities as coaches’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p. 325). That the same levels of scrutiny are rarely applied to similarly qualified or experienced White coaches within professional club environments are argued to be evidence of the ‘racelessness’ of whiteness and the racialised power imbalances within professional coaching environments, which allows senior club power brokers to set the boundaries of ‘racial’ inclusion and exclusion. Taken together, such processes are argued to lead senior club power brokers to negatively conceptualise ‘the appointment of BME coaches with ‘uncertainty’ and ‘risk’ and recruiting White coaches with whom they had more familiarity and social comfort’ (SPTT, 2014, p.16). These findings link strongly to other work which has identified perceived risks associated with BAME coaches who are believed by club power brokers to be better suited as players or recruiters than they are for senior coaching roles (Anderson, 1993; Rosette et al., 2008).

These factors are contended to limit the opportunities for BAME coaches to make the transition from playing to coaching in the English professional game and across other elite level European football settings. In this sense, taken together these taken for granted processes and practices of individual and systemic racial bias are contended to constitute a form of institutional racism (Bradbury et al, 2018). From a critical race theoretical perspective, whilst institutional racism may largely be unintentional, unconscious and merely a ‘product’ of the everyday operating of men’s English professional football, it nonetheless alludes to the permanence and centrality of racisms in professional sport (Burdsey, 2012; Hylton, 2009). Furthermore, these findings are argued to be underpinned by and illustrative of ‘the invisibility, centrality and normativity of hegemonic Whiteness embedded within the senior organizational tiers of the professional football industry’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p. 330). From this perspective, the definitional and relational power of Whiteness is argued to enable key power brokers in the sport to problematise BAME coaches, overlooking their experiences, abilities and
3 Literature review

potential, and to reinforce their position as ‘outsiders’ from the professional football coaching environment (Bradbury et al, 2018).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to examine the relationship between sport and ‘race’. Firstly, this chapter considered popular ideologies on the relationship between ‘race’ and sport and outlined prevailing beliefs on the apolitical and racially harmonious arena of modern professional sport in the Western world. This chapter then discussed critical understandings of the relationship between ‘race’ and sport and drew upon academic literature which positioned sport as a racial formation in which racial categories are generated, reinforced and resisted. This section then examined the presence of racisms in sport and found that despite popular framings of sport as a post-racial arena, racisms have been argued to be systemic in elite sport, and manifest in both explicit and nuanced ways. Secondly, this chapter examined the relationship between ‘race’, sport and coaching. This section found that although BAME players constitute a high proportion of many professional sport teams in North America and Britain, BAME coaches continue to be significantly underrepresented. Examining academic explanations for these figures, this section found that BAME groups are subject to various forms of access and treatment discrimination in professional sport. These processes and practices of discrimination were found to underpin the entry of BAME coaches into professional coaching structures, their progression through these structures, and result in the racially inequitable treatment of BAME coaches within professional coaching workplaces. Thirdly, this chapter brought forward arguments presented in the previous section to examine the relationship between ‘race’, football and coaching. This section found that BAME coaches are also significantly underrepresented in the Western European game, including England at both the senior first team and professional club youth academy level. Examining academic explanations for these figures in the men’s professional game in England, this section found that BAME coaches face difficulties in accessing high level coach education, and marginalisation and inopportunity through the normative job recruitment practices operated by professional clubs. These processes and practices were found to be representative of institutional discrimination in the professional football coaching industry, underpinned by the
invisibility and centrality of hegemonic whiteness. The next chapter of this thesis turns to consider societal and sporting approaches to challenging these racisms and explores the extent to which equality and anti-racisms measures have grasped the multiple ways in which racisms are manifest in professional sport.
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4.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider approaches to engendering equality in society and sport. Firstly, this chapter will draw upon relevant academic literature and legislative examples to outline predominant models of equality, comprising formal, liberal, and radical approaches. Secondly, this chapter will draw on relevant academic literature to examine official approaches to engendering equality in sport. This section will consider types of equality policies in sport, and the ways in which their development and implementation have underpinned their success. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the approaches in professional sport to engendering racial equality, and consider the ways in which their development, implementation and successes are underpinned by organisational cultures and attitudes towards issues of diversity and inclusivity. This section will also draw upon relevant literature to examine the types of equality policies in sport coaching, with a focus on Britain and so too North America where there has been a development of more redistributive equality measures within sport coaching. Finally, this section will examine racial equality within professional football coaching in England. This section will examine the recent introduction of a set of racial equality measures designed to address the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in the professional game.

4.2 Equality models

This section examines three models developed to interpret equality legislation (Johns and Green, 2009). This broadly mirrors the typology of equality developed by Forbes which places equality policy and legislation on a continuum from formal to liberal to radical equality (Forbes 1991; Johns et al, 2014). Proponents of each perspective maintain a focus on equality, however the difference in each approach exposes conflicting views as to what equality essentially entails.

4.2.1 Formal equality

*Formal* approaches to equality are targeted at forms of discrimination that may be termed direct discrimination (Johns and Green, 2009). This largely relates to
situations in which an individual or group targets another individual or groups for hostile treatment (Johns and Green, 2009). The most appropriate manner in which these types of discrimination are challenged is argued to be through ‘standardisation and tighter procedures’ (Johns and Green, 2009, p. 292). In this sense, formal approaches to equality have also been termed as ‘procedural justice’ (Weale, 1996). The standardising of procedures to treat every member of society equally is meant to eliminate room for discretion, as it is argued that through the exercise of preference or disposition that bias may emerge and discrimination take place (Forbes, 1991; Johns and Green, 2009). As such, formal approaches to equality can be considered to be non-interventionist in their retrospective and reactive approach to tackling discrimination. Tied to these notions, in treating individuals in a uniform manner formal equality legislation disregards any consideration of aspects of identities such as gender or ethnicity and their impact upon everyday lived experience (Forbes, 1991). It has been suggested that in the UK formal equality formed the central component of major social justice legislation up to the 1990’s, as could be seen in the principles of legislation such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Act 1995, as well as further regulations around sexuality, age and religion (Johns and Green, 2009). These single pieces of anti-discrimination law projected the message that ‘likes must be treated alike’ (Hepple, 2010, p. 12).

Regarding formal equality legislation targeted at ‘race’, the Race Relations Act 1965 represented Britain’s first example of equality law in any guise. This formal equality statute and others introduced in this period (most notably the Sex Discrimination Act 1975) could be seen as a gauge illustrating Britain’s most visible and pressing areas of inequality and discrimination – particularly in light of mass post-war immigration and subsequent widespread discrimination against first and second generation of New Commonwealth immigrants and their families. The Race Relations Act 1965 adopted what Reeves refers to as a ‘tripartite’ approach grounded in anti-discrimination (1983, p.115). The act sought to integrate in-migrants currently in the UK, introduce more effective controls for potential future immigrants and tackle public racial discrimination (Reeves, 1983).

However, it did little to address inequality and discrimination beyond specific and isolated incidents. These limitations were in part due to the inspiration provided
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for this act by US Civil Rights era ‘colour-blind’ legislation – an approach which sought to address racisms by denying ‘race’ and treating different ‘racial’ groups alike (Bleich, 2011; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; McCoy and Rodricks, 2015). These issues were partially addressed by the Race Relations Act 1968 as it sought to extend the areas in which racial discrimination was prohibited; including housing and employment (Reeves, 1983). However, criticism levelled at this legislation again characterised it as outward-looking; with a perception that the focus upon discrimination was projected from, rather than upon, government services, in particular the police (Reeves, 1983). In this sense, it has been argued that legislation of this era created an air of tolerance towards BAME groups rather than inclusion (Modood, 2006).

On the surface, through the prohibition of unfavourable treatment to all social groups these anti-classification approaches present an image of equality. However, the problems created and accentuated by failing to acknowledge the different social standing held by different groups have long been documented within academic circles (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lopez, 2003; Yosso, 2005). In positioning all individuals and groups as the same, formal equality attitudes effectively strip away the identities and backgrounds those social actors possess and present in public life. In this sense, formal notions of equality can be considered colour-blind in their denial of difference (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Formal approaches serve to individualise discrimination and ‘launder’ it of any wider structural connotations – here individuals are problematised rather than organisations in instances where inequality and discrimination is perceived or identified. The pitfalls of such a formal conceptualisation of equality and discrimination became increasingly apparent following the publication of the MacPherson Report into the failed police investigation of the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence (1999). This report exposed the ways in which racisms are not just about individual and intentional prejudice, but also about systemic and institutionalised processes embedded in ‘the way things are done’ (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967). As such, by recognising the institutionalised nature of discrimination and the ways in which racisms may be manifest unconsciously, ‘simply addressing individualised and direct forms of discrimination will not be enough’ (Johns and Green, 2009, p. 293). The structural components of racisms
and discrimination outlined by this thesis are thus left unchallenged by formal anti-discrimination approaches. From a CRT perspective, such an approach serves to address only the most visible and ‘egregious racial harms’ that are popularly identified impactful at an individual level (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p.22).

4.2.2 Liberal equality

It is the inadequacies of formal approaches to address anything other than direct and intentional discrimination that underpins liberal approaches to equality (Forbes, 1991). Proponents of liberal equality legislation argue that the concept of individual justice inherent to formal equality is ‘ill-conceived and inadequate’ (Johns et al, 2014, p. 99). The liberal model recognises that in certain areas inequality is embedded in society, and so the systemic nature of discrimination means that the material conditions of different groups in society need to be considered in the development of equality legislation. Liberal equality traditionally advocates equality of opportunity between different groups, however as will be outlined liberal approaches may be considered to exist on a spectrum which ranges from softer to harder variants of liberal equality.

Equality of opportunity is a predominant social narrative in many Western liberal societies (Bagilhole, 1997). Britain’s recent equality legislation has moved towards these more liberal approaches to equality of opportunity, referred to as a shift towards ‘substantive equality’ by Hepple (2010). This is identified by Fredman, who notes that substantive equality represents something deeper and far-reaching compared to formal anti-discrimination approaches to equality;

‘Formal equality, with its focus on the abstract individual, has failed to address deeply entrenched patterns of social disadvantage. In framing an alternative concept of substantive equality, distributive justice plays a central role. This means, in turn, that equality requires more than restraint from the state. In addition, it calls for a duty upon the state to take positive measures to promote equality, including, where appropriate, allocation of resources’ (2005, p. 163)

The move towards these conditions was accelerated within the political context
of calls for Britain to pursue a society built upon multiculturalism, within which racial equality was a central part of this philosophy. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 arrived at the end of a decade in which racism was placed at the forefront of public and political agendas. For example, a review by the now disbanded Commission for Racial Equality into the 1976 act coupled with the Macpherson report acted as the catalyst for an amendment which was introduced in New Labour’s first term and formed part of their agenda of multiculturalism (Worley, 2005). The parallel launch of the Future for Multi-Ethnic Britain report (Parekh, 2000) encouraged the emergence of a British racial equality framework of ‘community cohesion’ (Worley, 2005). The Race Relations amendment 2000 made it unlawful for public bodies to discriminate either directly or indirectly through the exercise of their services. In addition, positive duties were introduced in this amendment which required public authorities to promote both racial equality and positive ‘race’ relations (Fredman, 2011).

These positive duties emerged as part of calls for equality policy to recognise the substantive elements of ‘real differences of experience, background and perception’ (Meer and Modood, 2009). The promotion of a more substantive approach to equality underpinned the introduction of the UK Equality Act 2006 and the subsequent 2010 version – the UK Equality Act 2010. The UK Equality Act 2010 is particularly significant to Britain’s move towards substantive equality due to its emphasis upon proactivity on the part of employers to increase opportunities for disadvantaged groups (Fredman, 2011). The introduction of this act brought together and extended previous pieces of equality legislation. A key feature of this legislation was to maintain the unitary approach introduced in the Equality Act 2006; which moved away from an approach that was characterised as disparate and narrow. Britain’s current official public equality body the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) describes how the latest equality act creates a ‘single legal framework with clear, streamlined law’ so as ‘to more effectively tackle disadvantage and discrimination’ (EHRC, 2016). Similarly, Hepple describes how the introduction of the latest equality act has an overriding aim to achieve the ‘harmonisation, simplification, and modernisation of equality law’ (2010, p. 14). Critical voices were wary of the possibility of individual strands of equality being diluted within the context of this broad approach (Healy et al,
For example, Squires argues that government offices now required to broaden their equality focus have leaned towards the single-strand focus in the area in which they previously had a mandate (2009, p. 500). Healy et al also note how the potential exists for conflict to arise as decisions are made as to which strand requires more attention and resources effectively turning equality legislation into a competitive marketplace (2010).

The UK Equality Act 2010 contains scope for equality measures positioned between liberal and radical approaches to equality. Whilst the UK Equality Act may be considered in itself a softer variant of liberal equality, Positive action represents harder variants of liberal equality which aim to not simply offset systemic inequality but also undo it (Cunningham, 2000; Johns et al, 2014). Positive action provisions lie with sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act 2010 and their existence is premised on the notion that membership of particular groups makes a difference to outcomes, be it in regard to welfare, treatment or employment for example (Johns et al, 2014). Such groups are referred to as protected characteristics; nine of which exist in the Equality act 2010 which exist in order to protect people from being treated less favourably and cover; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ‘race’, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The presence of these protected characteristics in this piece of legislation reflects the identities and beliefs that have historically, and contemporaneously, been subject to subjugation and discrimination. It is in relation to these protected characteristics that employers and other bodies can develop and implement positive action measures. Section 158 of the Equality Act 2010 is more a generic provision which applies to employment and beyond. It specifically applies when an employer reasonably thinks that:

(a) persons who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to the characteristic,

(b) persons who share a protected characteristic have needs that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, or

(c) participation in an activity by persons who share a protected characteristic is disproportionately low
In these circumstances, employers are allowed to adopt special measures where it is deemed a proportionate means of achieving either the aim of; ‘enabling or encouraging persons who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise that disadvantage, meeting certain needs of employees, or addressing underrepresentation within workforces’ (Section 158, Equality Act 2010, UK Government Equalities Office, 2010). Section 159 of the Equality Act 2010 specifically concerns recruitment and promotion and allows organisations to use preferential treatment in the form of ‘tie-break’ provisions. These provisions mean that a candidate from a protected group can be favoured over another candidate where the candidates are as qualified as each other, and an employer reasonably thinks that the protected group is at a disadvantage, has a particular need or is underrepresented. Section 159 may only be exercised where the aim of a measure is to enable protected groups to overcome disadvantage; it is a proportionate means of achieving the aim, and there is not a policy of automatically treating protected groups more favourably (i.e. overlooking qualifications) (Section 159(4), Equality Act 2010, UK Government Equalities Office, 2010).

Although the Equality Act 2010 outlines the parameters of positive action, measures which fall under the umbrella of positive action may be flexible and varied in regard to form and scope (Noon, 2007; Verbos and Humphries, 2014). On this score, O’Cinneide suggests ‘different strategies may use different forms of positive action at different times, depending upon the nature of the disadvantages at issue and the relevant socio-economic and political context in question’ (2012, p.5). Although such measures have been legal in Britain since the mid 1970’s, positive action has yet to be widely used (Iganski et al., 2001; Johns, 2005; Johns et al, 2014). This is despite the flexibility of positive action in that it allows its practical delivery to match its theoretical principles; in the sense that its implementation can be tailored to specifically address the nature, context and scope of the discrimination it is designed to address. This flexibility of positive action means that these measures too may fluctuate on a scale from softer to harder variants (O’Cinneide, 2011). Whilst more softer measures may include particular forms of advertising or specific training targeted at marginalised groups, this may not necessarily produce intended outcomes. Indeed, Johns and Green
Positive action measures mark a shift in equality philosophies in that, without guaranteeing equality of outcome between these different groups, positive action shifts the emphasis from equality of opportunity to forcefully stimulating conditions more likely to result in equality of outcome (Johns et al, 2009; Rees, 1998). From a theoretical point of view, positive action is noteworthy in that it acknowledges discrimination that isn’t always intentional or ‘seen’. This is indicated by Fredman, who outlines the shift in expectations for organisations who may not recognise their own role in maintaining structural inequality;

‘Rather than being initiated by individual victims against individual perpetrators, proactive models place responsibility on public bodies, employers and others who are in a position to bring about change, whether or not they have actually caused the problem’ (2011, p. 408)

By acknowledging features of identity, positive action marks a departure from embedded meritocratic and colour-blind ideologies in British society and sport which are reluctant to consider anything beyond the ‘ability’ of a particular individual, in, for example, recruitment and employment decisions (Hylton, 2010). Whilst falling short of quota systems which guarantee a redefinition of normative institutional arrangements, positive action measures nonetheless represent a proactive and positive mechanism in which to challenge – as opposed to inhibit – discrimination and inequality (O’Cinneide, 2012). Indeed, the place of positive action measures in the UK Equality Act 2010 signals a gradual recognition that systemic inequalities will continue if unequal access to opportunities is left to chance or market forces. This point in particular denotes the relevance of positive action to a CRT framework in that positive action measures squarely align with the calls of Bonilla-Silva’s colour-blind racism thesis for ‘forceful’ and ‘regulated’ approaches to bringing about equality (2003).
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4.2.3 Radical equality

Where positive action fails to be classed as a ‘true’ radical approach to equality is its lack of guarantees in creating equality of outcomes. Whilst the progressive steps of positive action measures are acknowledged, they are deemed to lack the qualities required to truly redress structural inequality (Johns and Green, 2009). Advocates of radical approaches argue that liberal equal of opportunity legislation brings disadvantaged groups up to the starting line, yet these policies are still subject to the underlying attitudes of organisational decision makers and therefore don’t guarantee the full inclusion of these groups (Parekh, 2002; Healy et al, 2010). The term often given to this equality approach in Britain is positive discrimination, labelled so due to the use of strategies which take historically embedded discrimination and inequality as justification for the use of identity characteristics (such as ‘race’) as the definitive factor in recruitment or promotion decisions – as opposed to identity characteristics plus merit which constitute positive action measures (Cockburn, 1989; Johns et al, 2014; Noon, 2010).

Positive discrimination is currently illegal in (the majority of) Britain. For Collins, this is at least partially due to the entrenchment of the principle of equal treatment within British equality legislation, which is argued to have been too strong to bring about more drastic measure (2003). Indeed, equal treatment discourse is argued to have proved resistant to certain positive action measures, let alone positive discrimination (2003). Arguments in support of positive discrimination cite concerns with current ‘light-touch’ variants of liberal equality which are argued to rely on the ‘increasingly mainstream assumption that market forces provide the best route to equality’ (Noon, 2010, p. 729). Examples of these forms of radical equality have been deemed legally permissible in other countries, in India, the USA and Northern Ireland for example. These are nations that have in recent history diverged from laissez-faire approaches by implementing reservation or quota systems to confront historic inequality amongst various demographics, to varying degrees of success (Noon, 2010). For example, in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) between 2001 and 2011 there existed a ’50:50’ recruitment model to ensure fair participation between Catholics and Protestants in the workforce (McCrudden et al, 2009; Muttarak et al, 2013). This was established in order to address the severe underrepresentation of Catholics in a
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Police Service which was drawn overwhelmingly (92%) from the Protestant community and has been cited as making ‘a considerable difference to the composition of the Police Service’ (Heath, 2014, p.5). Equality legislation in these instances doesn’t encourage but technically forces employers and decision-makers to take a particular number of candidates from disadvantaged groups, effectively removing any autonomy from employers (Johns and Green, 2009). In this respect, positive discrimination is deemed radical in its embodiment of sweeping redistributive measures that are often in direct conflict with the equal treatment and meritocratic statutes of current legally permissible equality in many countries (Noon, 2010; Johns et al, 2014).

4.3 Equality in British sport

The development of official equality legislation in British sport was initially tied to the use of sport as a policy instrument in Britain. Various authors documenting the history of sport in national policy identified its emergence in the 1970’s as an area of public policy interest (Green, 2004a; Houlihan and White, 2002; Hylton and Totten, 2001). The interest of sport to policy-makers was founded upon a functionalist perspective which promoted the mantra of sport for all, a perspective to emerge in the creation of the Great Britain Sports Council in 1972 but that continues to influence popular perceptions on sport as an egalitarian arena today (Hylton, 2009). The idea of ‘sports equality’ formally emerged in British sport with the arrival of the New Labour administration in 1997, which provided the impetus for the formal uptake of equality policies in British sport and strengthened sport’s place within a social inclusion agenda (Lusted, 2014; Spracklen et al, 2006). Many formal and legislative changes occurred at this time within British sport regarding equality (Lusted, 2014). The Great Britain Sports Council was superseded by the emergence of UK Sport and Sport England; two bodies which attempted to embed principles of sports equality in funding provisions, to mixed degrees of success (Spracklen et al, 2006).

The predominant official approach to engendering equality in British sport has been through the development and implementation of charters and standards. These policies have broadly comprised a range of guidelines and expectations that National Governing Bodies (NGB’s) in Britain are expected to follow and
encouraged to progress through. Organised British sport is currently bound by the unitary UK Sport Equality Standard, which consists of a multi-tiered charter comprising of four levels. These levels are foundation, preliminary, intermediate and advanced (Equality in Sport, 2017). Organisations are mandated to reach the second level of the standard (preliminary level), however levels beyond that remain encouraged but not mandatory (Shaw, 2007).

The Standard recognises the protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act. In this sense, it is a charter that is synchronised with wider equality policy in Britain (Newman, 2002; Shaw, 2007; Equality in Sport, 2017). This is also evident in the opportunity provided by the Standard for sport bodies to meet public sector equality duties; which exist to encourage public sector organisations and employers to have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between different groups within sport (EHRC, 2016). To this end, British sport’s foremost equality policy can be considered a softer variant of liberal equality in that whilst a ‘due regard’ is encouraged this does not automatically constitute or encourage the implementation of more interventionist positive action measures. So too can this policy be considered ‘top-down’ in its hierarchical imposition upon NGBs and sports organisations; a feature typical of the way many equality policies in sport are implemented without meaningful discussion, collaboration or reflection with those organisations required to deliver them (Acker, 2000; Ely and Thomas, 2001; Kolb and Merrill-Sands, 1999; Lusted, 2014; Shaw, 2007).

Analysis of equality policy in sport has broadly been on two fronts; the procedural elements of policy and the underlying value positions of policy makers and policy implementers in sport (Long et al, 2005). Recent research into engagement with the Equality Standard has noted the positive work undertaken by a range of NGBs and sports organisations to broaden the appeal of their sports with traditionally underrepresented groups (Dwight and Biscomb, 2018). However, this research has also noted the continuing validity of previous critiques of the Standard regarding deep lying attitudes towards issues of diversity and inclusivity in sport, both amongst organisations charged with developing equality legislation and those organisations required to implement it (Dwight and Biscomb, 2018). For example, in the development and implementation of equality policy, it has been
found that in some instances there has simply been a telling or notification of how equality policy should be implemented (Shaw, 2007). This has is argued to have missed opportunities to contextualise the reasons for policy, by bypassing any organisational reflection as to how policy may operate and generate successful outcomes within organisations and beyond (Ely and Thomas, 2001).

Regarding the tensions between procedural and attitudinal elements of equality policy in sport, the Equality Standard’s ‘audit-based’ approach has been criticised for its undue emphasis on outcome-oriented equality rather than process-oriented equality (Shaw, 2007; Spracklen et al, 2006). This has been cited as stimulating a quick-fix, tick box style approach to equality within sports organisations that relies on simplistic quantitative outcomes (Shaw, 2007). Although the Equality Standard is argued to improve upon previous equality legislation which was seen to embody a hierarchical and rigid imposition on organisations (Shaw and Penney, 2003), the Standard is nevertheless argued to be representative of the shift in British sport towards an environment in which ‘organisational equality does not exist without audit’ (Shaw, 2007, p. 430). The filtering out of organisations as they progress towards the advanced level – achieved by less than 1% of organisations (Equality in Sport, 2017) – arguably stands as evidence as to the drawbacks of this approach. This audit culture is argued to generate a ‘bare minimum’ approach to embedding equality where ‘sports organizations are content to do what is required of them to reach the preliminary level (make a public commitment, adopt a policy, and undertake monitoring) but show little enthusiasm for doing more than they are obliged to do’ (Long et al., 2005, p. 53). For Lusted, this represents a ‘carrot and stick’ approach to engagement with equality and diversity issues, whereby government legislation which enforces organisational engagement with equality issues, in return for financial or resource-based incentives (2014).

This approach has been argued to demonstrate an equality by numbers scenario that reveals a conflation between diversity and inclusivity within sports organisations (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Specifically, it is argued that the audit-based approach focuses on equality outcomes rather than processes and as a result, sport organizations and NGBs may merely pay lip service to required objectives without regard for the structures, cultures and processes by which
outcomes can be achieved (Shaw, 2007; Spracklen et al., 2006). To this end, Lusted notes the existence of rhetorical commitments to equality policy in sports in regard to the Equality Standard where;

‘The first two of the four of these levels simply require the formation of an equality policy and action plan with no evidence needed of any change to the organisation or its service provision. Many organisations have reached these preliminary levels, but only a handful have gone any further than the very basic rhetorical commitment.’ (Lusted, 2014, p. 89)

Lusted has identified how commitments to equality and diversity have acted as rhetorical devices to hide underlying and enduring structural inequalities (2014). In this respect, it is argued that these gestural commitments have masked a neoliberal agenda present across many sporting contexts (and societies) which instead favours piecemeal incrementalism to gradually and ‘organically’ bring about equality. This has underpinned the shying away from ‘stronger’ variants of liberal equality in sport such as positive action (Lusted, 2014).

4.4 Racial equality measures in sport

Despite a greater recognition of the importance of equality policies within sport, current research questions whether racial equality is a high enough priority for many sports organisations (Long, et al., 2005; Swinney and Horne, 2005), or even deemed necessary at all (Lusted, 2014). Indeed, Lusted notes the significant challenge presented by the continuing deep-rooted ‘scepticism’ amongst sports organisations towards the very need for racial equality interventions (2014, p. 86). Such scepticism is arguably underscored by wider societal ambivalence or denial towards issues of ‘race’ and racisms in British sport. As Spracklen et al note, policy interventions to promote and engender racial equality in sport are ultimately reliant on sport’s social and cultural contexts, as well as the underlying value positions possessed by policy makers and policy developers (2006).

Formalised racial equality measures in sport first emerged within the wider social inclusion agenda of New Labour’s election in 1997, where an equality rhetoric was embraced by public equality bodies who had a specific remit for racial
equality (Hylton and Totten, 2001; Spracklen et al, 2006). One of the first sports to embrace racial equality policy was English professional football. The Racial Equality Standard for professional football clubs introduced by Kick It Out represented one of the first sport-specific racial equality policies designed in British sport. This policy was developed in accordance with Britain’s then-flagship sport-wide racial equality policy, the Sporting Equals Racial Equality Standard. Whilst initiating some notable changes, authors noted several shortcomings which effectively foreshadowed the critiques of the Equality Standard (Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006).

Drawing parallels with the Equality Standard, in spite of commitments from NGBs and other organisations, the ‘carrot and stick’ approach of the Racial Equality Standard was argued to result only in the attainment of the levels of the Racial Equality Standard which were tied to funding (Spracklen et al, 2006). This seemingly limited the development of more proactive and redistributive racial equality policies within a number of NGBs and organisations. Similarly, research has also noted an absence of compulsory training to inform organisational staff of both the reasons for the policy and the ways in which it may be delivered (Bagilhole, 1997; Long et al, 2005; Shaw, 2007). Relatedly, the absence of policy dissemination throughout all organisational tiers below the most senior levels was considered to limit the potential for members of an organisation to contribute to and mould policy (Shaw, 2007). However even in organisations where racial equality policies have been disseminated throughout, Ahmed identifies sports organisations where the awareness and commitment to policy is proven but meaningful engagement with it is not (2007). Furthermore, a lack of organisational resources to measure adherence to and impacts of equality policies was argued to ‘informalise’ and ‘muddy’ organisational policy evaluation through the reliance upon anecdotal evidence (Long et al, 2005).

Whilst some of these procedural features of the Racial Equality Standard have been argued to restrict the opportunities for organisations to develop meaningful racial equality policy within their own organisations (Dwight and Biscomb, 2018; Spracklen et al, 2006), it has also been argued that the presence of deep-seated negative attitudes and organisational cultures have underpinned the inconsistent implementation and outcomes of the Racial Equality Standard, and other racial
equality initiatives in sport (Gardiner and Riches, 2016; Malcolm, 2002; Swinney and Horne, 2005). On this score, racial equality policies have been identified as being conceptualised by some organisations as ‘external’, where policies are targeted ‘out there’ (at ‘them’) as opposed to ‘in here’ (at ‘us’) (Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006). This has been argued to be reflective of a belief amongst White power brokers that the routine, everyday operations of their organisations cannot of themselves produce or sustain discrimination and inequality (Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006). It is further argued that the ‘externalisation’ of racial equality has also been underscored by the failure of sports organisations to problematise whiteness amongst their ranks (Long et al, 2005). Indeed, this has been identified amongst the attitudes of some policy makers within sport who believe that equality is already present in their organisations, and consequently consider deep-rooted cultural and attitudinal changes unnecessary (Long et al, 2005). On this score, research has identified organisational cultures resistant to interventions from hierarchical sports bodies which are framed as challenging the agency of sports organisation to operate as they normally do (Long et al, 2005; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Spaaij et al., 2019). For example, Lusted identifies how ingrained ideals around meritocracy and objectivity in sport can create a resistance against efforts to introduce rigorous racial equality measures (2011). This resistance has been found to be premised upon a belief amongst power brokers and decision makers that sport should remain a politically neutral participatory space. Relatedly, the ongoing under-representation of BAME groups in some tiers of sports is argued to have been impacted (or informed) by the limitations of racial equality policies to challenge the embedded normativity of whiteness (Hylton, 2005).

These themes are consistent with other work which has found patterns of evidence of action but an absence of change within the implementation of racial equality legislation in sport (Ahmed, 2006; Horne, 1995; Lusted, 2014; Malcolm, 2002; Swinney and Horne, 2005). This has been argued to effectively produce a symbolic equality, which has been labelled by some authors as the notion of non-performativity (Ahmed, 2006). This refers to the commitment of sports organisations to implement identifiable elements of racial equality legislation without fully establishing the necessary conditions to foster change in their own
sphere of influence’ (2006, p. 110). On this score, Hylton outlines how the ‘non-performance’ of equality charters and related anti-racism initiatives can serve to perpetuate the racialised inequalities they are designed to challenge (2010). In this sense, it is argued that institutional speech acts (commitments) to promote equality and diversity are non-performative as they fail to deliver what they have promised (Ahmed 2006; Kimura, 2014). In effect, these symbolic and gestural commitments create equality policies that exist at two-levels. On the one hand, there exists a tier of commitment, evident amongst sport organisations who make these institutional speech acts. On the other hand, there exists a tier of action where organisations meaningfully engage with a policy. Crucially, under current legislation both of these standpoints are taken as evidence of the adoption or implementation of policy.

4.4.1 Racial equality measures in sport coaching

Approaches to racial equality in sport have been increasingly expanded to address issues in coaching. The inclusion of coaching within racial equality agendas has been underpinned by a growing recognition of the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in a range of professional sports as identified in chapter three, and a related push for sports to prioritise the recruitment of ethnically and culturally diverse coaching workforces (Norman et al, 2014). This is reflected in the later tiers of the Equality Standard, where organisations are expected to have made significant progress towards diversity amongst coaching staff and to have engaged with positive action measures as a means to achieving this, if necessary (Equality in Sport, 2017).

This is exemplified in the UK Coaching Framework, a practical point of reference developed by Sports Coaching UK intended to direct the development of coaching practice across Britain (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Sports Coach UK 2012). Informed by the overarching positive equality duties in the overarching UK Equality Standard, this framework outlines that a ‘more diverse, inclusive and equitable coaching workforce are central strategic objectives’ (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016, p. 358). However, the extent to which coaching organisations and NGB’s have evidenced action beyond commitments and intentions to racial equality within coaching remains a moot point (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Research
indicates that impacts have only been partial, in that commitment to racial equality rarely permeates and becomes embedded in the structures of sports organisations (Fletcher and Hylton, 2016; Long and Spracklen, 2011a).

This state of affairs has been argued to be at least partially due to a question of belief in the need for racial equality policies within sporting organisations (Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Lusted, 2014; Meyerson and Scully, 2003; Spracklen et al, 2006). For example, work in this area has argued that engagement with racial equality in sport coaching has been undermined by a belief in the equitability of existing arrangements, and that sport is a place of inherent meritocracy where opportunities are available for all (Lusted, 2017; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). A preference for the status quo has been identified amongst sporting organisations, which is argued to have stymied the development of radical racial equality measures in coaching, or harder variants of liberal equality approaches (Lusted, 2017).

It is some of these factors which have underpinned the development of positive action within racial equality agendas in sport and coaching in Britain. Whilst there is some history of positive action measures being used in relation to gender, (see UK Sport’s Code for Sports Governance (UK Sport, 2017)), there has been a historic underutilisation of positive action measures in relation to ‘race’ and coaching in Britain. Traditionally, the foremost examples of positive action measures (or national equivalents) targeting racial equality in sport coaching are to be found beyond Britain, within national and social contexts that have differing histories of racial oppression and segregation. The sensitivity of these measures to the particular histories of these countries means that they occupy varying places on a spectrum from positive action to positive discrimination.

Professional sport coaching in North America is an arena where measures similar to positive action have been established for a number of years. The Selig rule in Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Rooney Rule in the National Football League (NFL) can be considered harder variants of liberal equality measures designed to address the underrepresentation of marginalised groups (DuBois, 2016). This is in the way they consider factors beyond merit (such as ‘race’ and gender) in recruitment processes, without embodying a quota (Noon, 2010). Each
of these measures target the imbalances between the representation of players and coaches of colour in these sports as identified previously in chapter three. In doing so, they seek to dismantle some of the barriers experienced by minority coaches accessing managerial and coaching positions. For example, the Selig Rule first emerged in 1999 in an attempt to shift historically casual recruitment practices away from networks-based methods towards more inclusive recruitment practices which consider female candidates and candidates of colour for senior managerial and coaching roles (Lapchick, 2010). The rule was found to triple the numbers of managers of colour in the MLB in the first few years after its implementation, although the number of head coaches of colour has now receded to levels similar to the pre-rule time (ESPN, 2018).

The NFL’s Rooney Rule was developed in 2002 and features similar regulatory processes intended to formalise recruitment practices (Duru, 2007). The central aspect of the rule is for NFL franchise senior hierarchies to interview minority candidates as part of the search process for head coaches and other senior coaching positions (Duru, 2007; Lapchick, 2010). The rule was developed based on a report which emphasised the superior performance of head coaches of colour in the NFL yet highlighted the lack of opportunities provided to them and their increased likelihood to be sacked in comparison to White counterparts (DuBois, 2015; Thornton, 2009). The report also highlighted the different standards head coaches of colour were held to by club owners and the stereotypes they were subject to from club owners, arguing that coaches of colour only stood a chance of securing employment if they ‘incontrovertibly dwarfed their competition’ (Duru, 2011, p.34). Regarding the relationship between policy-makers and policy-implementers in the development of the rule, those ‘on the ground’ at least partially shaped the rule’s scope as club owners were consulted in the development of the rule by the NFL, as is argued to be beneficial at these initial stages of development (Ely and Thomas, 2001; Kolb and Merrill-Sands, 1999; Proxmire, 2009).

In the early years of the rule’s implementation, the number of head coaches of colour increased from two in 2002 to an all-time high of seven in 2008, although the figure of head coaches of colour in 2018 has since reduced to four (Lapchick, 2018). Despite this, longitudinal research has identified the positive long term
impacts of the rule on the likelihood of head coaches of colour being appointed, as the work of DuBois indicates that coaches of colour are ‘21% more likely to fill an NFL head coaching vacancy in the post-Rooney era than the pre-Rooney era’ (2015, p. 225). The rule was subsequently expanded in 2007 to include the position of general manager and other senior football operations personnel at NFL teams, and the rule has been credited with increasing the representation of people of colour amongst these positions too (Duru, 2014). Moreover, the Rooney Rule has been attributed to the successes of head coaches of colour in the NFL, as the 2007 Superbowl was contested by two teams’ coaches with head coaches of colour for the first time in its history (Duru, 2014).

These positive impacts of the Rooney Rule have been argued to be underscored by the creation of a process-oriented rule which provides a platform for meaningful interviews between candidates of colour and team decision-makers (Duru, 2014). These interview opportunities have been credited with forcing open traditional ‘old boy’ networks in the way that they expose team owners to highly qualified candidates (Collins, 2007). It has been argued this ‘forced’ recruitment mechanism has to an extent ‘neutralised’ potential racial biases that were identified as excluding coaches of colour from serious consideration for positions (Butler et al, 2010; Collins, 2007). These impacts are argued to support the use of harder variants of liberal equality measures such as positive action which utilise redistributive and forceful processual mechanisms to tackle systemic and unconscious discrimination (Singer, 2005).

The Rooney Rule has since become a staple of the recruitment culture of US sport (Duru, 2014). It has been expanded both within the NFL to include other coaching and managerial positions, and other areas of sport such as the NCAA which as previously identified is also a site of underrepresentation between players and coaches of colour. It’s successes in dismantling hegemonic practices has prompted calls for its application to British contexts, where the adoption of bespoke equality policies has been supported in order to challenge more institutional forms of racism in men’s professional football coaching in England (Bradbury et al, 2018). This has recently come to fruition as the Rooney Rule is the central informant of the development of the EFL codes of coach recruitment, and it is to a discussion of racial equality measures in men’s professional football.
4 Racial equality measures in sport

in England where this chapter now turns.

4.4.2 Racial equality measures in football coaching

Stimulated by external pressure from lobby and campaign groups, there has been a growing commitment within men’s professional football in England to address the underrepresentation of BAME coaches outlined in the previous chapter. A range of measures have recently been developed which lie on various points on a spectrum from softer to harder variants of liberal equality, dependent upon the point of the ‘coaching pipeline’ targeted and the nature of the disadvantage experienced (Noon, 2007; O’Cinneide, 2012; Verbos and Humphries, 2014). These measures focus on coach education and coach employment, ranging from the point of accessing coach education courses through to securing paid employment at a professional club. The introduction of these measures indicates a proactive step beyond gestural engagements with more generic equality charters that are argued to lack the framework to address issues underpinning the underrepresentation of BAME coaches (Hylton, 2010).

Measures targeted at coach education seek to provide supporting resources to empower BAME coaches to achieve high level coach education qualifications. As part of this, a sign of the increasing commitment of the game to addressing racial inequities in coaching can be seen in the recently introduced ‘In Pursuit of Progress’ equality policy of the sport’s NGB, The Football Association (FA). Introduced in 2018, this is a set of three-year action plans which seek to increase the diversity and inclusivity of the organisation and its departments (FA, 2018). In regard to coach education, the FA has broadened its work in this area by enabling 15 elite level BAME coaches to undertake 12-month coaching placements at first team and youth national team camps (FA, 2018). This represents a targeted harder variant of liberal equality which not only includes BAME coaches within organisational and professional spaces they were previously excluded from but seeks to increase the visibility and employability of BAME groups in the coaching marketplace. In this overarching equality plan, the FA has also expanded the delivery of the Coach Inclusion and Diversity programme. Since its inception as a smaller scale pilot project in 2012, this programme has gone on to provide financial support to around 100 BAME coaches per year to achieve FA UEFA B,
FA UEFA A, and FA UEFA Advanced Youth Awards (Bradbury, 2016). Evaluation of this programme has indicated some partial success on this score and also in engendering a series of wider developmental benefits for participants, such as ‘on the job’ technical expertise and experience and the opportunity to network with senior coaches in employment (Bradbury, 2013, 2016).

The reservation of spaces for BAME coaches to undertake high level coaching qualifications or training is replicated in the Premier League’s Elite Coach Apprenticeship Scheme (ECAS). ECAS is a two-year initiative in which coaches undertake a period of development and mentorship from established elite coaches in the game, as part of the scheme six places are reserved for BAME and female coaches, which will increase to 9 during the 2018/19 season (Premier League, 2019). So far 13 BAME coaches have ‘graduated from the scheme’, with a further 9 undertaking training (Premier League, 2019). Both the FA Bursary scheme and ECAS can be considered a softer variant of positive action in that they represent specific and targeted training for marginalised groups and are designed to change the composition of a potential applicant pool (DuBois, 2016). Softer variants can also be found in the targeted work of the Professional Footballers Association (PFA) and League Managers Association (LMA) to deliver professional development masterclasses, coaching clinics, and interview preparation support to BAME coaches (LMA, 2018). Whilst these initiatives present specific training to marginalised groups, they do so on an individual basis without enabling equitable recruitment structures.

In the sphere of coach employment, measures have sought to move beyond designs of ‘educative empowerment’ to attempt to dismantle institutional barriers embedded in normative processes and practices of coach recruitment. These programmes have been inspired by the Rooney Rule and present the strident form of positive action deemed necessary to challenge institutional racism and bring about structural and cultural change (Bradbury et al, 2018; Singer, 2005). The FA have adopted a bespoke version of the Rooney Rule when recruiting for any national team coaching position, where at least one BAME candidate will be interviewed for a position when a suitably qualified BAME candidate applies (2018).
The most substantive measures in this area have been implemented by the English Football League (EFL) which after a period of consultation with stakeholders including the NFL in June 2016 launched the ‘voluntary’ and ‘mandatory’ codes of coach recruitment. These codes embody a set of interventionist policy measures through which all 72 member clubs in the second, third and fourth tiers of the English professional game have been encouraged to adopt uniform and equitable practices of coach recruitment. The voluntary code is targeted specifically at first team operations and was first implemented at 10 pilot clubs during the 2016-17. The voluntary code expects professional clubs to interview at least one suitably qualified BAME candidate (where an application is received) in instances where they operate a full recruitment process at the first-team level. In contrast, the mandatory code is targeted specifically at professional club youth academies and was implemented at the beginning of the 2016/17 season at all 72 member clubs (69 of which had an academy at this time). The mandatory code requires all EFL club youth academies to run a full recruitment process for any coaching position that requires an individual to hold as a minimum an FA UEFA B license, and that these positions should be advertised publicly on the EFL and club website for at least seven days. In addition, clubs must interview at least one suitably qualified BAME candidate for any coaching position where an application has been received, although this demand will be waived when promoting a suitably qualified internal candidate regardless of ethnicity.

In line with previous discussions in this chapter, these codes can be considered as harder variants of positive action that seek to redress historical disadvantage. This is in the way that they not only target a marginalised group but also seek to directly address the roots of that marginalisation (Fredman, 2011; O’Cinneide, 2012). For example, intentions to formalise recruitment practices seemingly indicates a challenge to previously outlined networks-based methods of recruitment. The codes’ seemingly go beyond mere equality of opportunity and shift emphasis towards equality of outcomes – without guaranteeing it. This is in the way they consider merit and racial identity in recruitment processes and practices, in doing so abandoning traditional colour-blind approaches to the ways in which candidates are selected and hired (Cockburn, 1989; Johns et al, 2014; Noon, 2010). In this sense, both of these codes appear to embody an approach
4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed approaches to engendering equality in society and sport. Firstly, this chapter discussed predominant models of equality, encompassing formal, liberal and radical approaches. This chapter identified that liberal equality measures are the foremost model utilised in Britain, although these measures resided on a continuum which comprised softer to harder variants of liberal equality that embodied equality of opportunity or shifted towards equality of outcome. Harder variants of liberal equality such as positive action was found to be underutilised in Britain, however this section found that measures of this kind may represent proactive mechanisms in which to challenge historic, unconscious and systemic discrimination and inequality. Secondly, this chapter sought to examine predominant approaches to equality in professional sport. This section found that sport has traditionally utilised charters and standards that embody softer variants of liberal equality which are rooted in notions of equality of opportunity. Engagement with these measures were found to be merely processual and largely tokenistic, which left problematic normative institutional cultures and structures untouched. Thirdly, this chapter examined approaches within professional sport to engendering racial equality. This section found that despite commitments to racial equality, these were rarely reinforced with necessary cultural and structural change. This was argued to be underpinned by a lack of belief amongst sport’s governance and administration as to the necessity of anything more than merely softer liberal approaches, such as positive action which was found to have been underutilised in British sport. In national contexts where measures similar to positive action were utilised, this section found that the Rooney Rule represented a regulatory mechanism to effectively address some of the underlying racialised barriers experienced by BAME coaches in sport and provided a springboard for coaches of colour to further their careers. Finally, this section examined the recent introduction of a range of positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England. This section found
that these measures fluctuated in their scope in the ways they sought to address issues faced by BAME coaches in coach education and coach employment. However, it was argued that the EFL’s codes of coach recruitment represented a uniquely substantive approach to establishing equitable coach recruitment practices and processes. This thesis will examine the implementation and impacts of these positive action measures in later data analysis chapters. Next, however, this thesis turns to outline the methodological approach of this research.
5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodological underpinnings and discuss methodological issues central to the research. Firstly, this chapter will outline the paradigmatic justifications of this research and its philosophical underpinnings. This will discuss the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives of this research. Secondly, the chapter will outline the research design adopted in this thesis, and will explore relevant sampling techniques, issues related to gaining access to the sample group, and important ethical considerations around issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Thirdly, this chapter will discuss the types of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques utilised in this research. This section will discuss the relevance of each of the techniques used for this specific piece of research. Fourthly, this chapter will outline the process of data analysis, and discuss the reasons for adopting the selected data analysis method. Finally, this chapter will offer a reflexive account of the research process. This section will discuss the ways in which my own identity impacted upon different stages of the research process. This will particularly explore my position in this research as a White researcher, and how this impacted upon my rapport and relationships with participants and the data they provided.

5.2 Paradigm justification

The paradigm adopted within a particular piece of research indicates its philosophical underpinnings. A paradigm encompasses the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives of research (Mayan, 2009). Guba and Lincoln define a research paradigm as a ‘set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) . . . and a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts’ (1994, p. 107). Whilst the paradigm adopted within a research study may often tend to be seen as arbitrary, it is argued that this overlooks important metaphysical discussions which are important to have at the outset of
and throughout the research process. Mason, for example, notes how an unwillingness to address these significant issues usually ‘stems from vagueness, imprecision, or a failure to understand that there is more than one ontological perspective’ (2017, p.12). In addition to providing clarity and direction within the research (Mayan, 2009; De Vaus, 2001), Lincoln notes that paradigms ‘tell us something about the researcher's proposed relationship to the Other(s). They tell us something about what the researcher thinks counts as knowledge, and who can deliver the most valuable slice of this knowledge’ (2010, p.7). This is particularly pertinent within CRT informed research regarding whose knowledge and realities are given primacy in society and sport (Parker and Lynn, 2002; Solorzano and Yosso, 2002). In short, the research paradigm reveals the ways in which researchers seek to understand the social world.

The paradigmatic stance adopted by researchers is reflective of their worldview and informs chosen methods and methodologies (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Whilst paradigms are sometimes framed in the literature as a choice made by a researcher, Sparkes and Smith note that rarely are paradigms selected (2014). Rather, ‘assumptions and postulates of a paradigm are learned via the processes of socialisation, telling researchers what is important, legitimate and reasonable to study’ (p. 9). As a result, the adoption of paradigms could be referred to as a ‘mutually self-reinforcing process'; a closed cycle in which research assumptions and methodologies confirm each other (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.9). However instead of rigidly adhering to normative and static paradigmatic assumptions, Maxwell advocates a pragmatic approach which is driven by the ultimate goal of investigating research questions. Creswell and Poth similarly advocate that researchers adopt approaches which are matched to the research aims they are attempting to address (2017). This involves evaluating which paradigm is the most appropriate fit with methodological preferences and goals of the research (2017). This paradigmatic approach is particularly relevant for this research in which qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques are used. When adopting a research paradigm, Guba and Lincoln write that three questions must be asked; these are the ontological question, the epistemological question and the methodological question (1994). The answers to these questions provide the foundation of all research (Grix, 2010). This chapter now turns to answer these
questions in the context of this thesis, beginning with the ontological question.

5.2.1 Ontological perspective

The ontological question asks what is there to know? (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The ontological position adopted by researchers informs their assumptions on the ‘nature and form of reality’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Considering the theoretical underpinnings of this research, the ontological perspective adopted in this thesis is one of critical theory. A critical position regards traditional positivist and constructivist ontological positions as insufficient, as they both neglect the political and ideological context of research (Cohen, 2011). Instead, a critical ontology posits realities that are apprehendable yet constructed, and subject to power struggles which produce divergent realities for different groups. These realities are contended to be shaped by a series of ‘social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.110). The crystallising of these factors into a series of constructions (such as ‘race’) has meant that despite their plasticity these factors are now perceived as ‘real’, natural and immutable (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). With regards to this particular thesis and it’s CRT underpinnings, this ontological position perceives that ‘race’ has no objective meaning. However, a critical ontology recognises that ideas of ‘race’ are regularly mobilised, producing material outcomes for different groups (Calmore, 1992).

5.2.2 Epistemological perspective

The epistemological question within social inquiry asks how do researchers come to know what they know? Epistemological assumptions centre upon ‘the relationship between the knower or the would-be-knower and what can be known’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). A critical epistemology posits that the researcher and the researched are interactively linked (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). A critical epistemology assumes that the values of the researcher and of the historically located ‘other’ in the research influence the knowledge acquired or created (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). As a consequence, a researcher adopting this position is unable to claim neutrality with regards to the research subject matter (Cohen and Arieli, 2011). However, this is welcomed by a critical epistemology as this approach assumes that knowledge is socially and historically located.
(Mertens, 2007). More specifically, that predominant knowledge in society is created through processes of power and oppression which have traditionally served to marginalise the knowledge and experiences of, amongst others, BAME groups. In this sense Ladson-Billings notes that CRT perspectives ‘unabashedly reject a paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail’ (1998, p.62). This is a perspective expanded upon by Hylton, who notes that traditional mainstream epistemologies in social research are perceived problematically to be value free, which has largely served to reinforce ‘colour-blind, ‘race’ neutral, ahistorical, and apolitical points of view’ (Hylton, 2012, p. 25). In line with the theoretically informed approach of this thesis, perceived neutrality and objectivity in research is argued to ‘naturalise’ processes of oppression and inequality, and in doing so silence the stories of those whose experiences have traditionally been marginalised in mainstream social research (Duncan, 2006; Hylton, 2012).

5.2.3 Methodological perspective

The methodological question in research asks how can a researcher go about finding whatever they believe can be known? (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Ontological and epistemological assumptions impact upon the research methodology developed, however, this does not automatically predetermine the methods used in a given study (Lincoln et al., 2011; Sparkes and Smith, 2014; Whaley and Krane, 2011). Whilst ontological and epistemological positions may constrain the methods used in a particular study (Willig, 2001), Sparkes argues that ‘exactly how data are collected is not something that the researcher’s ontological or epistemological position prescribes’ (2015, p. 50). From a CRT perspective, Hylton outlines that ‘there is no one narrow methodological approach, nor a reductionist set of predetermined agendas’ to CRT research, although this doesn’t diminish the need for suitable and considered methodological tools to investigate the outlined research aims (Hylton, 2012, p. 28). The use of multiple methods to investigate the research questions in this thesis means it can be considered ‘a ‘bricolage’, a pieced together, close knit set of practices which provide solutions to problems in concrete situations’ (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, p.2).
This thesis utilises methodological triangulation in the use of both quantitative (online survey) and qualitative (interview) methods. This was decided with a view to increasing the clarity and depth of understanding of the field being investigated (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This is in contrast to a single method approach which has been criticised for its inability to reveal the fluidity and variation of human experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017). It is therefore not uncommon for researchers to combine the use of qualitative and quantitative within research (Sparkes, 2015). Whilst the use of both of these methods in the same study have been critiqued on the grounds of their ‘incompatibility’ (Howe, 1988), critical research encourages a pragmatic methodological framework which locates itself within the ‘growing demand for methods that address the range and scope of new novel research questions emanating from new theoretical contributions’ (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3). As a consequence, this thesis adopts a CRT-informed methodology which attempts to capture knowledge from both dominant and marginalised ethnicities (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Further, despite CRT’s traditionally qualitative embodiment (McCoy and Rodricks, 2015), the mixed methods utilised in this research enables the measurement of the representation and captures the experiences of BAME coaches. This research therefore aligns with other CRT-informed methodologies which have adopted this two-pronged, mixed methods approach (Carter and Hurtado, 2007; DeCuir-Gunby and Walker-DeVose, 2013). To this end, this research seeks to move away from traditional quantitative versus qualitative debates to illustrate the ways in which pragmatic methodologies using quantitative and qualitative methods in conjunction are useful in providing unique insight to a particular topic (Johnson and Onwuegubuzie, 2004).

5.3 Research design

5.3.1 Sample group

Whilst some research designs seek to plan and propose specific timeframes and techniques, in social research it is often more the case that a plan of inquiry develops and takes shape as a research study advances (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Sampling techniques were an area of this research in which these issues
were starkly illustrated. This research in effect adopted two different types of sampling. On a broad level, criterion-based sampling was implemented as I had a specific population I intended to target containing individuals possessing a ‘particular feature, attribute or characteristic, or… a specific experience’ relevant to my research aims and questions (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.179). In the survey sample group (as illustrated in Table 5.1 below) were members of staff in senior academy coaching positions with responsibility for academy operations, including the recruitment and management of coaching staff. These were individuals Patton may refer to as information rich in respect to the survey questions and the research questions of this thesis (2002).

**Table 5.1 Online survey sample group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Academy secretary</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Head of player development</td>
<td>Category one academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Head of youth</td>
<td>Category four academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Head of coaching</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category one academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Academy director</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Head of academy coaching</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Academy director</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The interview sample group included professional club chief executives, club youth academy managers, BAME coaches (currently or previously employed at professional club first team or youth academy settings) and key stakeholders who worked in governing bodies and campaign groups (illustrated in Table 5.2 below). This range of people were not only information rich in respect to the research questions of this thesis, but with regard to the different positions they held in relation to the codes of recruitment they also represented groups whose ‘views, experiences and so on would bring contrasting or complementary insights to the enquiry’ (Ritchie et al, 2013, p. 87). In regard to BAME coaches, interviewees varied in terms of age, position occupied and experience levels dependent upon whether they worked in first-team or academy environments. This diversity was felt important due to anecdotal evidence in previous research on the differences in experiences regarding generation and occupational seniority amongst BAME coaches (SPTT, 2017). Whilst a list of potential participants meeting relevant criteria was developed and contacted, like many research studies responses were mixed and a relatively small percentage of individuals replied to initial requests.

As a consequence, this interview stage of the data collection for this thesis also employed snowball sampling, defined by Sparkes and Smith as instances when ‘researchers rely on participants to direct them toward others who meet the study’s criteria for inclusion’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 179). This sampling method was most useful in clubs containing multiple coaches from a BAME background. Once contact had been established with one coach (or the academy manager), in some cases contact details were provided for other coaches who worked in the same club, who could be contacted by myself to try and arrange an interview. In effect, these participants then became gatekeepers; ‘individuals or groups who control information and can grant formal or informal entry and access to the setting and participants’ (2014, p. 77). This sampling method has its
critiques around the limited range of perceptions and experiences due to its reliance on inter-personal relationships and networks (Browne, 2005; Baltar and Brunet, 2012). However, it did open up a larger pool of potential participants and introduced me to informed individuals who had not previously come under discussion.

Table 5.2 Interview sample group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category one academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Academy manager</td>
<td>Category three academy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>First-team manager</td>
<td>Championship club</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>First-team coach</td>
<td>Championship club</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category one academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category one academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
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<td>BAME</td>
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<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category one academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
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<td>Academy coach</td>
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<td>Academy coach</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
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<td>Category two academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category two academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Academy coach</td>
<td>Category four academy</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Club chief executive</td>
<td>Championship club</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
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</table>
5 Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Club chief executive</th>
<th>League One club</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Club chief executive</td>
<td>League One club</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Club chief executive</td>
<td>League Two club</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Football Association</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Football Association</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Football Association</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Football Association</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Kick It Out</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Sport’s People’s Think Tank</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Professional Footballers’ Association</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Professional Footballers’ Association</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Key organisational stakeholder</td>
<td>Professional Footballers’ Association</td>
<td>BAME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2 Gaining access

There was a symbiotic relationship between sampling techniques and sample sizes, and issues related to gaining access to participants. A number of models of best practice are outlined in methodological literature to assist in gaining access to a sample group, such as providing clear information about the purpose and objectives of the study, being open and consistent about what is required from participants, and clarity about how the findings will be used (Bryman, 2001; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Holloway and Wheeler, 1996; Patton, 2002; Richie et al, 2003). These were all followed in this research, and in some cases appeared to aid access and rapport, two features Maxwell argues are key for the development of research and relationships (1996). For example, these mitigation strategies appeared to assuage the fears of some participants employed in senior organisational positions who felt that quotes or survey responses would be directly attributed to them which could damage their personal or organisational reputation. In these instances, university ethics forms and protocols (discussed in detail later) were an effective object of reassurance which appeared to increase the confidence of some participants in the study (Bryman, 2012).

In the interview stage of data collection, gatekeepers helped access participants in some cases. To negotiate access, Wanat highlights the significance of building relationships with gatekeepers (2008). In this research, a relationship had been
built with some academy managers who had previously undertaken the online survey and had also taken part in a semi-structured interview. A number of these individuals subsequently acted as a mediator between myself and BAME coaches in their academies. In these instances, these academy managers possessed useful ‘local influence and power to add credibility and validity to the project by their acceptance of it’ (Sixsmith et al, 2003). The gatekeeping role played by these academy managers was particularly useful in accessing BAME coaches in junior coaching positions, as they acted as bridge to negotiate an individual-organisation dichotomy (Bryman, 2012). Whilst the specific sample group of participants contained individual coaches, these coaches were employed within football clubs and I had to consider that access to an organisation didn’t necessarily result in access to an individual (Bryman, 2012). This gatekeeping role was also played by a number of key organisational stakeholders, who effectively acted as a point of clearance to reach other participants in their organisation (Bryman, 2012). Further, my supervisor’s previous research also meant that he represented what Seidman might refer to as a ‘legitimate’ or ‘respected’ gatekeeper, in that his name had become associated with impactful activist research in this area (2006).

In some cases however, these individuals acted as both enablers and constrainers. For example, whilst my supervisor put me in touch with some BAME coaches and key stakeholders, my attempts to speak to the English Football League (EFL) were hindered by our association. Myself and my supervisor had visited the EFL offices at an early stage of this PhD and had a promising conversation about evaluating the codes of coach recruitment on an ‘official’ basis with the EFL’s blessing. However, at a later event any nascent relationship broke down, and despite numerous solo attempts to gain access to the EFL in which I attempted to emphasise the value and relevance of this research to their organisation (Bryman, 2012), efforts were unsuccessful. Young argues that researchers who are ‘matched’ with their participants in regards to socio-demographic characteristics such as ‘race’, class, gender and sexuality are placed in a superior position when attempting to access participants (2004). Whilst my position as a White person argued placed me as an ‘insider’ in regards to the EFL hierarchy (Fletcher, 2014), in this particular example the
cultural characteristics I shared with the White, male senior staff of the EFL appeared to be superseded by my identity as a researcher.

5.3.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations and decisions are a central part of any research. In order to proceed with this research, ethical approval was sought from Loughborough University’s Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee; standard ethical forms were submitted as part of this application, including a risk assessment, participation information sheet and an informed consent form. In the literature, this is referred to as ‘procedural ethics’ (Guilleman and Gillam, 2004, p.262). What procedural ethics highlight is a consideration of ethical principles and considerations pertinent to a research study. Following the relevant ethical procedures had usefulness throughout the collection of data as this process served as a “practical reminder that we need to be both mindful and active in protecting our research participants (and ourselves) from harm and undue risks, as well as affording respect for autonomy’ (Guilleman and Gillam, 2004, p. 277).

A number of authors suggest that although ethical concerns fit within a range of tasks traditionally seen as ‘pre-study’, ethical considerations are in fact not a ‘one-off’ and researchers should remain attentive to potential issues throughout a study (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.79). Particular unpredictable and problematic scenarios that may arise during research are referred to as ‘ethically important moments’ by Guilleman and Gillam (2004, p.262). Resultantly, in addition to the completion of pre-study standard ethical procedures, I tried to be continually aware of possible emergent issues throughout the collection of data. In this sense, I was conscious of Guilleman and Gillam’s notion of ‘ethics in practice’ throughout the data collection phase of this PhD (Guilleman and Gillam, 2004, p.263).

Consent was one such ethical issue that I was attentive to throughout this study. Sparkes and Smith note how informed consent is ‘based on the notion that people should be allowed to agree or refuse to participate in a study based on them having comprehensive information concerning the nature and purpose of the study’ (2014, p. 213). Franklin et al describe how seeking consent from participants at the outset of data collection can provide opportunities to keep the
researcher ‘informed about context-specific ethics through the questions and possible concerns that gatekeepers and the participants raise in the initial stages of a project’ (2012, p. 1731). For this particular study, a participant information and informed consent form was circulated by email or handed directly to participants in advance of completing the online survey or undertaking a telephone/faceto-face interview. Both of these forms featured requisite information as required by Loughborough University’s Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee and outlined the focus of the research and responsibilities of the researcher with respect to issues of anonymity and confidentiality. When it came to the period of actual data collection, before undertaking the survey participants were asked once more within the survey software to provide their consent, and at this point were reminded that they could decide to withdraw from the study at any point. For face-to-face interviews participants were encouraged to read through the relevant forms both over email in the days prior to the interview and again at the commencement of the interview and encouraged to raise any issues or concerns they had. For telephone interviews, verbal consent was sought at the outset of the phone call to check participants still provided their consent; a common strategy to secure consent within telephone research (Carr and Worth, 2001).

Informed consent was often only given when participants were assured of confidentiality, a key ethical concept that should be seen as a fundamental principle of social research (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). A key condition of this concerns the protection of the identities of researcher and participant and the location of the research itself (Christians, 2005). The data collection periods where these issues were most pertinent involved face-to-face interviews undertaken in public locations. For example, some interviews took place in coffee shops whilst others were in football club canteens. Conducting interviews in these locations’ present challenges in terms of participant confidentiality and anonymity however in these instances they took place in corners of these establishments, away from members of the public and so minimising the chance of conversations being heard. Participants were also reassured that all data collected would be stored confidentially and any research findings would not be made public (through possible publication of academic journals) until the end of 2019 at the earliest.
Whilst confidentiality and anonymity are often seen as non-negotiable in social research, in practice this can be difficult, particularly within the relatively small yet highly-mediated world this research took place in. The public nature of elite sport has been argued to ‘create tensions for narrative accounts when other actors are central. In particular, the researcher’s attempts to observe recognized good practice in research ethics can be troublesome’ (Mellick and Fleming, 2010, p. 300). This seemed especially pertinent when participants would refer to other players, coaches and clubs throughout the course of an interview, and when multiple coaches employed at the same club were interviewed. This presents challenges regarding protecting not just immediate participants and their organisations but so too external actors and organisations. As Damianakis and Walford point out, caution must be exercised ‘when participants know each other through connections that transcend shared geography, such as, professional or personal networks’ (2012, p.709). This is exacerbated in a relatively high-profile field where current and previous places of employment are often ‘open secrets’; where many individuals would need little information to identify others. The implication of this means due diligence needs to be exercised throughout the process of data collection and analysis in order to protect the privacy of all actors involved, and others beyond the research (Mellick and Fleming, 2010).

However, due diligence creates tensions in some research. Sparkes and Smith describe how it is the ‘researcher who takes responsibility for deciding what aspects of a person’s stories or life circumstances need to be changed to maintain confidentiality’ (2014, p. 219), which can reinforce traditional researcher-participant dichotomies and may cause participants to feel like they are losing ownership of the data (Kaiser, 2009). These debates are particularly significant when research seeks to ‘give voice’ to marginalised groups (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 216-217). Within CRT-informed research that seeks to foreground the stories and experiences of marginalised groups, protecting confidentiality and anonymity may adversely silence these voices. Allowing participants to be named recognises the power their narratives have, as this reduces the role researchers play in deciding how and to what extent data is altered after it has been collected (Hylton, 2012). The ‘blanket anonymisation’ of participants within sociological research has been argued to keep the nameless nameless (Moore,
Such a feature of research appears to be discordant within CRT-informed research that seeks to ‘privilege voices ignored in research, to decolonise knowledge’ (Hylton, 2012, p. 30).

In this study these issues were addressed in two ways. Firstly, many participants asked to be both kept up to date with ongoing research and provided with a copy of the main findings of the thesis once completed, giving them an active stake in the research. Secondly, the positions participants occupied, the organisations in which participants were employed, the political nature of the subject matter and the nature of the social world in which this research took place actually served to emphasise the importance of anonymity and confidentiality for many participants. Before the outset of interviews many participants sought confirmation that any information and opinions disclosed would only be seen by myself as the researcher; and all quotes and references to other individuals and clubs would be anonymised (this was most pronounced in interviews with club chief executives). As such, whilst the naming of participants would explicitly foreground the marginalised voice, this was somewhat constrained by these ethical issues. To negotiate these tensions, this research adopts the use of individual descriptors for each participant felt to be relevant, e.g. ‘BAME first team coach, BAME youth development coach, White academy manager’. Whilst not unproblematic, this practice was adopted as it is argued to represent a reflexively considered middle ground in maintaining anonymity whilst ensuring participant voices are heard (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006).

5.4 Data collection

5.4.1 Online survey

Quantitative data for this research was collected through a cross-sectional online survey which was designed, tested and then circulated to all 69 Football League club youth academies (3 Football League clubs were not operating an academy system at the time the survey was distributed). In order to gather data on the representation of BAME coaches in professional club youth academies and the procedural implementation of the mandatory code, a survey was felt to be the most appropriate technique of data collection as they provide a ‘quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a
A survey was also chosen for this phase of data collection largely due to its convenience in terms of generating large amounts of data in a relatively quick turnaround (Sparkes and Smith, 2014), something absent through the use of ethnographic qualitative methods alone (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Considering the relative novelty of this research, a survey also represented a particularly appropriate format of data collection due to its capacity to offer a broad range of information in an area that was relatively unexplored (Pinsonneault and Kraemer, 1993). The lack of exploration in this area meant that the survey acted as a point of access for subsequent data collection and thus presented an opportunity to recruit participants for later interview-based phases of research.

The decision to implement an online survey was based on its cost-effectiveness, practicality and lower demands on time (Cohen and Arieli, 2011; Toepoel and Schonlau, 2017). The survey was developed using Online Survey (OS) (formerly known as Bristol Online Survey), an online survey design tool assisting development, formatting, distribution and analysis of surveys over the internet. This platform was particularly convenient as Loughborough University possess an OS license, making it free for Loughborough student use. In addition, OS provides a large range of formats and modifications within the programme which usefully allowed the survey to be as user-friendly as possible (Wright, 2005).

The survey itself consisted of a mix of closed and open questions. These questions garnered data on the representation of BAME coaches in professional club youth academies, within which there were more detailed questions on the breakdown of full and part-time staff. The survey asked questions on the procedural implementation of the mandatory code of coach recruitment, in regard to the frequency, type and length of job advertisements, applications received, interviews conducted, and jobs awarded. The survey also contained questions which asked academy managers for their wider perspectives on the significance of ethnic and cultural diversity within coaching workforces (a copy of the survey is included in the appendices). The survey was live for a period of four weeks, and after being initially distributed to academy managers it was followed up with weekly reminder emails until the time period for completion ended. In total, 23 out of 69 club academies responded to the survey, representing a response rate of...
33%. 16 of the respondents to complete the survey were academy managers, whilst 7 respondents occupied either assistant academy manager, head of coaching, academy secretary or head of player development roles: all of whom had sufficient operational knowledge of club academies to complete the survey appropriately. Data generated were collated in an analysis tab of OS and individual surveys were downloaded as pdf files to allow more in-depth analysis. These were then subject to a process of coding in order to identify key numerical figures, patterns and trends with regard to issues relating to the representation of BAME coaches in professional club youth academies, the procedural implementation of the mandatory code, and perspectives on ethnic and cultural diversity within professional club youth academies. This also contributed to the development of interview guides for the subsequent interview stage of research to be undertaken with the same population group. This was illustrative of the relevance and utility of a mixed methods approach to this research as survey data was later returned to in order to be ‘re-analysed’ in light of key themes to emerge in the interview stage.

5.4.2 Interviews

Interviews in qualitative research are often described as a type of conversation (Burgess, 1982, 1984; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Ritchie et al, 2013). More specifically, they have been described as a ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Webb and Webb, 1932, p.130). Within qualitative social research, three types of interview format are commonly identified; structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Fielding, 1994; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This research used semi-structured interviews as a form of data collection. It is argued that semi-structured interviews rely not on an interview schedule, but an interview guide to direct the conversation; creating (2014). In this sense, they are deemed helpful to creating a flexible yet purposeful direction to research interviews, which allows researchers to;

‘Collect the important information about the topic of interest while giving the participants the opportunity to report on their own thoughts and feelings’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 84).
Semi-structured interviews encouraged a wide-ranging yet relevant conversation which covered intended areas and revealed interesting contextual information. These types of interviews were also deemed beneficial as they have been argued to enable participants opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in a relatively organic way (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

Two modes of interview were adopted during the data collection phase, telephone and face-to-face. Face-to-face were the desired interview mode in this phase of data collection, however ultimately the mode, time and place of interviews were the choice of participants, which provided participants some autonomy over the interview process (Greene and Hill, 2005). This meant that telephone interviews were occasionally utilised in this research. Telephone interviews were utilised due to their time efficiency as a number of participants in this research were extremely busy (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Whilst telephone interviews have been critiqued due to their difficulties in terms of rapport building and the inability to read body language and facial expressions, Sparkes and Smith note that this absence of personal interaction may also encourage participants to speak about sensitive issues or topics that they may not have in the direct environment of a face-to-face interview (2014). More practically, telephone interviews are said to be liberated of spatio-temporal restraints (Sparkes and Smith, 2014), and as such proved a useful way of conducting research with interviewees; a number of whom were employed in roles which often involve varied working hours and a considerable degree of travelling (Robson, 1993). All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder using a telephone recording connector and transcribed verbatim myself. This was done to immerse myself in the data, an act of familiarising that Roulston claims can raise particular analytical questions (2014).

Face-to-face interviews for this research were largely undertaken at club training grounds or organisational headquarters, with a few exceptions when participants picked a more convenient public setting such as a coffee shop. Although short notices and job demands meant telephone interviews were necessitated in some instances, the majority of interviews that were conducted during data collection were face-to-face interviews. When an option, face-to-face interviews are argued to increase the quality of data due to the presence of visual cues (Hopper, 1992).
Visual cues are said to have a number of effects, including engendering informal communication and contextual information, developing rapport between interviewers and participants, and enhanced interpretation of responses (Chapple, 1999; Opdenakker, 2006; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Sweet, 2002). Finally, whilst face-to-face interviews are not immune from the power imbalances present in many qualitative data collection techniques, strategies used to minimise this power imbalance included valuing participants’ time by thanking them (O’Kane, 2000) and reducing the authoritative image of the interviewer by using informal language (Hill, 2012). This was a strategy most commonly used by a pre-interview chat with participants – which often culminated in participants buying or making me a hot drink beforehand (and, admittedly less frequently, vice versa).

Interviews began with a broad overview of the playing and coaching backgrounds of the interviewees. After this initial ‘icebreaking’ period of the interviews (Sparkes and Smith, 2014), interviews broadly moved into four interrelated but distinct segments. Many of these questions in the main body of the interview were what Flick refers to as ‘theory-driven’ (2009, p. 53), in this case informed by the core tenets of CRT. These questions are particularly useful in that they ‘serve the purpose of making the interviewees’ implicit knowledge more explicit’ (Flick, 2009, p. 53). Further reflections on the interview process are expanded upon in a later reflexivity section. Interviews with these participants lasted between 30 minutes and 2hr 15 minutes and were transcribed verbatim by myself.

5.5 Data analysis

5.5.1 Thematic analysis

The process of data analysis in research is defined by Bernard as ‘the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place’ (Bernard, 2011, p.338). Data analysis took place throughout in order to inform subsequent phases of data collection. The analysis method used in this thesis was thematic analysis, and it was selected as a mode of analysis due to its flexibility and its generation of themes which can then be linked to theoretical and conceptual issues (Clarke and Braun, 2018).

The analysis process broadly followed the six-step approach outlined by Clarke
and Braun (2018). After transcribing data, re-reading transcripts and annotating them represented a method of familiarising myself with the data, during which researchers ‘begin to notice things that might be relevant to your research question’ (2018, p. 61). Initial codes were then generated in order to identify key trends, patterns and emerging issues – generating the bones of the analysis (Charmaz, 2006). A code is broadly defined as a short, simple and specific label that symbolises a piece of the data (Saldana, 2015). It represents a way of labelling the ‘essence’ of a particular segment of data (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

Coding was an essential process within this research as systematically labelling the data helped me ‘to understand the social world under scrutiny, and the way the participants view it’ (Basit, 2003, p.144). Coding was undertaken manually using pens and pencils, a method deemed to provide more ownership of the research and control over the analysis process in comparison to electronic alternatives (Saldana, 2015). Coding was supplemented through notetaking and reflections throughout the data analysis period (often on journeys to or from research interviews). These ‘analytic memos’ encouraged a more considered approach to the identification of codes (Saldana, 2009, p.32). Codes were then grouped into subthemes according to the reoccurrence of certain issues, patterns or concepts (Clarke and Braun, 2018; Gomm, 2008; Saldana, 2015). Important to note is that these themes did not simply emerge from the paper, rather coding was an ‘active process’, where themes were generated or constructed as opposed to being discovered (Clarke and Braun, 2018, p. 63). Themes were then reviewed in relation to each other and the coded data in order to make sure that themes meaningfully captured data (Clarke and Braun, 2018).

Themes were then named and defined, in order to encapsulate the data within and the analytical narratives articulated (Clarke and Braun, 2018). This was particularly the case in the final analysis and discussion chapter which followed a different structure to the more ‘formulaic’ structures of chapters seven and eight. As advocated in the literature, the analysis process did not end as analysis chapters were written (Clarke and Braun, 2018; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). The writing of analysis chapters involved consideration of the ordering of themes and key arguments, a process which involved reflection and revision upon the themes developed.

5.6 Reflexivity and identity positioning
There are a variety of factors which influence social science research, making it important for researchers to be reflexive regarding their own position and decision-making processes throughout a study (Bryman, 2012; Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Etherington, 2007; Warin, 2011; Phelan and Kinsella, 2013). To be reflexive in research is for researchers to place themselves and their practices under scrutiny, ‘acknowledging the ethical dilemmas that permeate the research process and impinge on the creation of knowledge’ (McGraw et al., 2000, p.68).

As part of this process, researchers are encouraged to consider the ‘connections between the self and the study’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.19). These dynamics impinge upon a variety of aspects of the research process, such as the collection of data and the way it is presented and analysed by a researcher (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Impacting factors upon this process include gender, age, class, religion and ethnicity, which ‘shape what we know, how we think and feel, and how we are embodied’ (Vannini 2012, p.78). Reflecting upon these processes can reveal the influences of the choices made by a researcher and encourages an understanding of the ways in which research is conducted and interpreted (Bryman, 2012).

As a White British male, I have received privileges in a range of social, academic and sporting settings as a result of my real and embodied identity. Indeed, McIntosh’s invisible knapsack of Whiteness (1997) that outlines a number of indicators of White privilege reads like a chronicle of my own every day lived and sporting experiences. In this sense I share similar experiences to Nebeker, who writes that ‘my whiteness has always offered me a racial shield’ (1998, p.32). Given these experiences, I am keenly aware that my racial identity has been argued to be irreconcilable with a CRT framework. Bergerson for example notes that White researchers are not in an ideal position to conduct research with BAME groups since we have not lived the experiences that we are attempting to document (2003). Other literature has outlined the argument that White researchers within ‘inter-racial’ research are often cloaked by White methods and consequently can only ask ‘White questions’, these being questions that maintain the normalised privileges of White researchers and White participants (Frankenberg 2004; Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi 2008; Hylton, 2009).
Ethnographic methods in particular – such as interviews about and with groups from BAME backgrounds – have been subject to a considerable debate and discussion as to who can and should conduct this research (Scheurich and Young, 1997; Tillman, 2002). Such discussions have centred around the problematic representation of BAME groups and the reinforcement of white privilege this can maintain (Dillard, 2000; Frankenberg, 2004; Gordon, 1990; Stanfield, 1994; Tillman, 2002). Scheurich and Young note that dominant perspectives within research about ‘race’ has positioned White people and White worldviews, perspectives and epistemologies as the ‘norm’ (1997). It is argued that these research traditions and the knowledge they have produced have acted as a catalyst for some BAME scholars to ‘create and develop alternative spaces and methodologies for the study of their communities’ (Cruz, 2001, p.658).

These are notions that I was (and continue to be) keenly aware of in collecting and analysing data for this research. I was particularly aware that I was not the first researcher to contact many of the BAME coaches and BAME organisational stakeholders that I interviewed. This is reflective of sociological research into sport and ethnicity (and in academia more broadly) in that the majority of research in this field has been undertaken by White researchers (Bulmer and Solomos, 2004). I consequently felt as if I was ‘just another White guy’ dropping in to undertake research with BAME people – akin to some sort of racialised interloper. Such thoughts were founded upon previous research which has noted a sense of distrust from BAME participants towards White researchers (Duneier, 2004). These feelings are contended to be particularly apposite when researchers from a position of privilege attempt to ‘provide’ counter narratives on behalf of marginalised groups (Puwar, 2004). I was concerned that this would impinge upon the interview process, particularly for older coaches who had spoken on these issues many times (with researchers from a range of backgrounds). However, without ‘desensitising’ myself from issues of positionality, throughout interviews I felt that some of these tensions of cultural difference competed with similarities in identity. In this research whilst I felt my racial identity positioned me as an ‘outsider’ in some senses, being male and of a similar age to many of the interviewees provided what Fletcher may refer to as a ‘valuable commonality’ (Fletcher, 2014, p.253). On multiple occasions interviews were
preceded or interrupted by ‘water cooler’ talk about similar experiences which appeared to encourage an openness between myself and participants. This echoed the arguments of researchers who claim that such fixed binaries of identity can overly emphasise differences between researchers and participants and encourage a restraint from sensitive areas. This has been argued to stymie the quality of data collected (Berry and Clair, 2011). Indeed, in a number of cases some of the BAME coaches interviewed provided their own testimonies around their experiences of racism within professional football. There was a ‘rawness’ to these narratives on occasions, and whilst my racial identity meant I couldn’t draw upon a shared experience which could have elicited different data, I did not feel that the differences in racial identity between myself and many of the participants severely limited the depth and ‘honesty’ of our interviews. Instead, this could have provided a cross-racial conduit through which to encourage open-ness in a way in which ‘same race’ interviews might not have (Rhodes, 1994).

Where racial dynamics were at least as keenly felt was in discussions with White academy managers and White club chief executives. The characteristic of Whiteness I shared with these participants may have created a sense of ‘ease’ within interviews, within an open discussion in which these participants may openly express their opinions on ‘race’, discrimination and diversity in sport coaching (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Feagin’s white racial frames allude to this possibility when he speaks of a racial ‘backstage’ in conversations about ‘race’ between White people, where more open and less ‘guarded’ discussions may emerge due to the lack of social pressures to appear politically and socially correct (Feagin, 2013). Such conversations did not emerge however in the data collection phase of this research, instead there was a reticence amongst many of these interviewees to discuss in detail issues of racial inequality and diversity. Explicit conversations on such issues were rare with some interviewees as there appeared to be a personal and organisational defensiveness around issues of ‘race’. A number of interviewees appeared conscious of PR which at times appeared to stymie the depth and ‘realness’ of conversations. Considering CRT’s social justice agenda and transformative intentions, at such points I could have pushed candidates further to reflect more critically about their ‘race’ and their own
privilege and ‘complicity’ in reproducing the racial status quo. This is a strategy encouraged by Gallacher to break the ‘normalised’ whiteness in these settings (2000). That I didn’t encourage such a critical reflection amongst these participants is perhaps indicative of my own privilege in being able to talk about issues of racial inequality and diversity without truly venturing into uncomfortable and challenging conversation, although admittedly this was also a practical reality of maintaining rapport within the interview process. As a result, the role I adopted in this data collection was one of an ‘acceptable incompetent’ (Fletcher, 2014, p. 253). In these interviews I hoped to present myself as ‘someone who is partially competent [skilled and knowledgeable in the sport] in the setting, but who is accepted as a non-threatening person who needs to be taught’ (Neuman 2000, p. 359–360). In this sense, I was wary that critical discussions around the privileges of these participants could be detrimental to the collection of future data.

Taken together, it is argued that these critical reflections illustrate that researchers do not have to ‘come from the racial or cultural community under study to conduct research in, with, and about that community’ (Milner, 2007, p.388). Rather than restricting research with racial or cultural groups to researchers of the same backgrounds, these reflections on my own positionality within this research illustrate the necessity for researchers to ‘be actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that can surface when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned’ (2007, p.388). I argue, as others have done before, that my own self-reflexivity in this research was assisted by my adherence to the methodological and theoretical principles of CRT (Bradbury et al, 2018; Fletcher 2014). My engagement with CRT throughout this thesis has confronted (and continues to confront) me with a number of epistemological questions (within the research and my everyday life). This I believe has engendered a more considered and reflexive approach to the way in which I attempt to not only centralise the experiences of marginalised groups, but also to the way in which I, as a White person, talk about whiteness in sport.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological underpinnings and discussed the
methodological issues central to the research. Firstly, this chapter outlined the paradigmatic justifications of this research and its philosophical underpinnings. This section outlined an ontology and epistemology underpinned by critical theory. The ontological perspective adopted outlined a number of realities that are subject to socio-historical processes and related power relations. The epistemological position adopted outlined how these power relations have shaped not only the knowledge that is accessible but also whose knowledge this is. The methodological perspective adopted outlined a pragmatic mixed methods approach which seeks to utilise quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection to capture knowledge from both dominant and marginalised ethnicities.

Secondly, the chapter outlined the research design adopted in this thesis. This section discussed and justified the use of criterion sampling and described how snowball sampling was also utilised in order to negotiate issues pertaining to the accessibility of participants. These issues were particularly related to the simultaneously helpful and hindering role of gatekeepers. The importance and relevance of ethical considerations to this research were located in discussions around confidentiality and anonymity. This section outlined the employment of strategies to ensure a balance between providing protection for participants without silencing the marginalised ‘voice’. Thirdly, this chapter discussed the types of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques utilised in this research. This section justified the use of an online survey, and telephone and face-to-face interviews, and found that each of these methods represented appropriate ways to elicit data required to investigate the research questions of this thesis. Fourthly, this chapter outlined the process of data analysis. This section outlined the process of thematic analysis utilised in this research, and found it provided a structured yet flexible method through which to analyse large amounts of data. Finally, this chapter offered a reflexive account of the research process. This section discussed my own positionality within this research. As a White researcher, I reflected on the negative implications of my identity for this research through literature which has discussed the dominance of White voices in social research with a range of ‘racial’ backgrounds. However, this section also considered how in some cases my whiteness and other aspects of my identity may have created unique opportunities in the research processes to develop a rapport and relationships with participants. This thesis now turns to the data
analysis chapters, beginning with an examination of the EFL’s mandatory code of coach recruitment.
6 Representation and experiences of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England

6.1 Introduction

This analysis chapter will describe the representation of BAME coaches in men’s English professional and examine the experiences of BAME coaches in securing positions of paid employment. The focus of this chapter upon representation and experiences means that it seeks to investigate the first research question of this thesis. This chapter will do this in the following ways. Firstly, this chapter will begin with an analysis of the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England, at the senior first-team and youth academy level. This section will draw upon secondary and primary data to outline the representation of BAME coaches, before using primary data from research for this thesis to compliment discussions around emerging patterns and trends in the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England. Secondly, this chapter will examine the experiences of BAME coaches in first team and youth academy football. This section will draw upon qualitative data to analyse the experiences of BAME coaches in attempting to secure positions of paid employment in men’s professional football in England. Using previous research to inform discussions, this section will posit the existence of three distinct yet interrelated barriers that BAME coaches are required to negotiate in coach employment contexts.

6.2 Representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England

6.2.1 Representation of BAME coaches in first-team coaching positions

Previous research has examined the representation of BAME managers and coaches at the first-team level of men’s professional football in England (LMA, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018; SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Figure 6.1 below draws upon this existing literature to outline the representation of BAME coaches in first-team football across three comparable senior positions; head coach, assistant head coach and first team coach.
When compared to the representation of BAME players in men’s professional football in England (approximately 30%), this table indicates that there is an underrepresentation of BAME coaches employed in senior first-team coaching positions in men’s professional football in England (SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). In regard to representation in each position, these figures suggest that BAME managers account for 3.3% of all first team managers (SPTT, 2017). For first team assistant managers, BAME coaches account for 3.3% of all positions (SPTT, 2017). Whilst the representation of BAME coaches in first team head coach positions rises slightly to 6.2% (SPTT, 2017). When an annual average is calculated across these three senior coaching positions to provide an overall representation, the representation of BAME coaches has remained relatively stable; ranging between 3% and 5%. Taken together, as with the coaching profile in a number of British, European and North American sporting contexts previously outlined in chapter four, these figures indicate senior first team coaching positions are overwhelmingly occupied by White groups (Bradbury et al, 2018; Lapchick, 2018; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Sports Coach UK, 2012). Any annual proportional increases have remained at an incremental level and have showed
little sign of permanence over the four-year period, which is a phenomenon that has mirrored the representation of coaches of colour in major sports in the US which have not introduced a Rooney Rule type policy (Lapchick, 2018). For example, whilst the overall representation of BAME coaches in senior first-team coaching positions peaked at 4.4% in 2016, this figure dropped back to 4% the following year (LMA, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). The absence of upward trends appears to be reflected in the relatively narrow geographical distribution of BAME coaches in senior first-team positions. For example, this representation has largely been accounted for by clubs in the South East of England, who have had a recent consistent record of appointing BAME managers and coaches (SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

6.2.2 Representation of BAME coaches in youth academy coaching positions

Previous research has also examined the representation of BAME coaches at the youth academy level of men’s professional football in England (LMA, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018; SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Figure 6.2 below draws upon this existing literature to outline the representation of BAME coaches in youth academy football across three comparable senior positions; academy manager, development squad head coach (U21’s) and youth squad head coach (U18’s).

**Figure 6.2 Representation of BAME coaches in senior youth academy coaching positions from 2014-2017**
When compared to the representation of BAME players in men’s professional football in England and the representation of BAME players in men’s professional club youth academies (approximately 40%), the secondary data presented in this table indicates that there is an underrepresentation of BAME coaches in senior coaching positions in men’s professional club youth academies in England (SPTT 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Annual averages indicate that the representation of BAME coaches in senior club youth academy coaching positions has mirrored patterns at the first-team level, in that representational levels over this period have fluctuated between 3.6% (2016) and 5.1% (2017). Taken together, as with the coaching profile in a number of British, European and North American sporting contexts previously outlined in chapter three, these figures indicate senior youth academy coaching positions are overwhelmingly occupied by White groups (Bradbury et al, 2018; Lapchick, 2018; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Sports Coach UK, 2012). As with the first-team level, any increases in representation have been incremental and concentrated around a select cohort of clubs, which suggest any increases have not been part of long-term upward trends. For example, a large proportion of the club academies who illustrate a strong recent record of appointing BAME coaches are located in the South East and Midlands regions of England (SPTT, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

Quantitative data collected for this thesis provided figures on the representation of BAME coaches at the youth academy as a whole. Figure 6.3 below presents data on the representation of coaches from White and BAME backgrounds in all coaching positions within youth academies.

**Figure 6.3 Representation of coaches at youth academy level**
The primary data (online survey) collected for this thesis indicated that 408 coaches were employed at the 23 respondent clubs. Of these 408 coaches, 68 were from a BAME background. The survey therefore suggests that BAME representation is significantly lower than the representation of White coaches at the youth academy level of men’s professional football in England. However, compared to the representation of BAME coaches in senior first-team and senior youth academy positions, this figure of 16.7% represents a marked increase. 18 of the 23 (78.2%) respondents to the survey reported having at least one BAME coach in their workforce, which represents a significant increase on the number of clubs to employ BAME coaches in first-team positions. However, patterns of spatial distribution largely followed established patterns in senior first-team and senior youth academy positions. For example, the survey suggested that 55% of all BAME coaches were employed at only 6 academies. Again, all 6 of these academies were located in the Midlands and South East regions of England.

As discussed in chapter three, previous research has sought to not only identify the levels of diversity in professional sport coaching workforces, but also at which levels this diversity is found (Cunningham, 2010; 2017; Lapchick, 2004; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016; Spracklen et al, 2006; Suggs, 2005). The patterns of occupational segregation identified in this literature was partially reflected in survey data which revealed the breakdown of BAME coaches in full-time and part-time youth academy coaching positions. Figure 6.4 below presents data on the levels of BAME coaches employed in full-time and part-time coaching positions in youth academies.

**Figure 6.4 Representation of BAME coaches in full-time and part-time coaching positions at youth academy level**
This chart indicates that BAME coaches are disproportionately employed in part-time coaching roles, with nearly three quarters of the BAME coaches employed in youth academies being employed in a part-time coaching position. Contextualising these figures, survey data suggested that 40.1% of the overall (White and BAME) coaching workforce in youth academies are employed in full-time positions, whilst 59.9% of all coaches to work in youth academies are employed in part-time positions. Overall these figures imply a higher proportion of BAME coaches working in roles on a part-time or sessional basis than White coaches. The survey indicates that there are 7 times the number of White full-time coaches than there are BAME full-time coaches, whilst there are only 4 times the number of White part-time coaches than there are BAME part-time coaches. Although part-time roles do not directly correlate with positions of decreased responsibility, the figures noted in the survey and in previous research suggest that the coaching workforces of academies are settings where BAME groups are disproportionately concentrated in coaching positions on the periphery (DeHass, 2007).

6.2.3 Emerging patterns and trends

This next section combines the secondary and primary data presented so far to draw out emerging patterns from the combination of these sets of data. Figure 6.5 below compares the representation of BAME groups across men’s professional football in England.

**Figure 6.5 Representation of BAME groups in Britain and men’s professional football in England**
Figure 6.5 illustrates that BAME coaches at all levels of the sport continue to be underrepresented in comparison to the levels of BAME players. This underrepresentation is most intense in the levels of BAME coaches in senior first-team positions, whilst youth academy environments apparently represent the most diverse elite coaching environments. The primary and secondary data presented so far provide indicate some patterns of occupational segregation within first team and youth academy settings in isolation, most notably in regard to the far higher numbers of BAME coaches employed in part-time coaching roles rather than full-time positions of increased seniority within youth academies. Particularly strong evidence for the existence of occupational segregation however is demonstrated in figure 6.5. The data suggests that there are nearly quadruple the proportion of BAME coaches in youth academy coaching positions (16.7%) than there are at the senior first-team level (4.3%). This does suggest that in the professional football coaching industry ‘individuals of various racial/ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately represented in various occupational groupings’ (Cokley, Dreher and Stockdale, 2004). Senior first-team positions represent the elite end of the coaching spectrum, whereas academies are more developmental oriented and holistic in their objectives. On a hypothetical coaching pipeline, youth academies have historically, although not exclusively, represented arenas in which prospective first-team managers and coaches develop skills and experiences. In this sense, the disproportionate representation of BAME coaches across these two coaching arenas implies the presence of an institutional blockage which impedes progress through to first-team positions.

The following section of this chapter will consider explanations for these representational statistics. Although this section will foreground the informed experiential testimonies of BAME coaches, this section will also draw upon the reflections of academy managers, club chief executives and key organisational stakeholders, of whom participants represented both White and BAME backgrounds.

6.3 Experiences of BAME coaches in men’s English professional football

Interviews revealed three distinct yet interrelated barriers which served to limit opportunities for BAME coaches within the coach recruitment pipeline. These
barriers identified were limited access to elite level coach education, networks-based approaches to coach recruitment, and racial bias and stereotypes in coach recruitment. Some of the following themes were more specific to either first team or academy coaching settings; however, many were also felt to overlap. This next section does not claim that all of these explanations are experienced by all BAME coaches; rather they represent some common experiences and reflections. Furthermore, the following section also does not deny the agency and ability of BAME coaches who do currently occupy positions of paid employment. However, these explanations support the argument that BAME coaches occupying coaching roles do so despite current normative recruitment practices (pre-dating the codes’ introduction), not because of them (SPTT, 2016).

6.3.1 Limited access to elite level coaching qualifications

Previous research into the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in sport has noted generally lower levels of high-level qualifications amongst BAME coaches as a factor impeding career mobility (Norman et al, 2014; Fletcher et al, 2014). In professional football, lower levels of high-level qualifications amongst BAME coaches has been argued to be underpinned by a series of racialised obstructions which deny BAME coaches’ opportunities to access elite coach education courses, such as UEFA B, A and Pro License qualifications (Bradbury, 2015; SPTT, 2014). Similarly, participants in this research identified patterns of access discrimination which impeded the ability of BAME coaches to access high-level coaching education courses (including UEFA B, A, Pro License and Advanced Youth modules) necessary to work within professional clubs and youth academies. Previous research has highlighted the ‘adverse impact of not being in employment as coaches at professional clubs and being positioned outside of the eyeline of key gatekeepers at professional clubs’ (Bradbury et al, 2018, p.320). In this research, whilst many BAME coaches referenced the positive effects of schemes such as the FA COACH bursary scheme in ‘upskilling’ BAME coaches, several interviewees felt that knowledge of and pathways into coach education courses remained out of reach for coaches who were not already in employment at professional clubs. A number of BAME coaches and key stakeholders spoke of the negative outcomes of being positioned outside ‘knowledge-heavy’ networks where information on coach education courses was
readily available. One BAME academy coach who had previously enjoyed a high-profile playing career felt this restricted the opportunities available to prospective coaches:

“So I’m part of the coaches LMA. They throw out courses that you can go to. This one, that one, but if you’re not part of that do you get the same courses thrown at you? I don’t know. Before I even stepped into this academy arena I don’t remember getting offered things because I wasn’t in the world.” (BAME Coach, category two youth academy)

This was felt to be especially the case in regard to gaining access to elite level courses such as the UEFA A License qualification, for which courses were felt to regularly be oversubscribed and limited in their availability. These features of elite level coach education were felt by some interviewees to create a ‘channel’ that prospective coaches had to get into. This was felt by several interviewees to mean access to such courses remained out of the reach of a number of BAME coaches who lacked the employment histories and social connections to enter these channels. These themes were articulated by a BAME academy manager who commented on the experiences of some of his BAME coaching staff:

“I’ve got lads who want to get onto A licence courses at the moment. From what I understand, there was 120 spaces and there were 500 applicants. Apparently, the criteria was that you’ve got to be either in a full-time role or linked to a professional football club. There’s definitely a line that you’ve got to get into” (BAME academy manager, category three youth academy)

Relatedly, another form of access discrimination identified in this area was felt to be the lower salaries received by BAME coaches. These lower salaries were felt to be underpinned by patterns of occupational segregation and the employment of BAME coaches in part-time positions of lower responsibility. This lower financial capital was felt by a number of interviewees to present barriers to accessing high-level coaching qualifications. These perceptions mirrored North American research which has identified the impacts of occupational segregation upon the opportunities for minority coaches to access often costly high-level coach education courses (Cunningham, 2010). In this research, a number of interviewees felt that the lower wages received by BAME coaches employed in
academy coaching workplaces amplified the ‘real’ cost of coaching qualifications. This was deemed to restrict opportunities for BAME coaches who largely occupied lower paid academy roles to develop their qualification portfolios and subsequently advance their careers. For example, a BAME coach in a category two academy commented on the restrictive impacts of the low wages available in some youth academy coaching positions;

“The wages that are paid are nowhere near enough and that is what is stopping people going into the game and really going up” (BAME coach, category two academy)

Similarly, a BAME coach at a category two academy felt that the low wages available in some youth academy coaching positions meant that some elite level coaching qualifications remained out of reach for a number of BAME coaches. This was felt to be particularly the case with respect to the UEFA Pro License qualification, which is necessary to hold first-team management positions. He reflected below on the perceived intangibility of this qualification for those coaches employed in some youth academy coaching positions;

“I know you’ve got coaches working in the academies because they want to work and they’re on 15 grand a year. It takes them two years to get a pro licence, and a pro licence costs nearly 9 grand.” (BAME coach, category two academy)

These issues were also relevant at the first-team level of professional coaching, where perceptions of a lack of a pathway through to a viable management or coaching career and the financial costs of coach education courses was felt to demotivate prospective BAME coaches from undertaking elite level coaching qualifications. As with other sports in European and North American contexts this discouragement was felt to create a ‘supply-side shortage of potential head coaches’ amongst BAME groups (Cunningham and Singer, 2010, p.1709). This has been argued to result in a lack of diversity in the pool of qualified applicants for coaching positions (Brown, 2002; Cunningham et al., 2001; Cunningham et al., 2006). This was identified by a White chief executive at a League Two club, who reflected on the impacts of demotivational factors on the numbers of suitably qualified BAME coaches;
“I do think over a period of time we’ve got this training gap where you possibly haven’t got as many BAME candidates as you probably would expect with their UEFA A, B, or their Pro License. That would probably be one of my thought processes, that maybe they’re being discouraged from doing their badges because it is an expensive process and they probably felt it was a waste of time.” (White chief executive, League Two club)

Interview data indicated the cumulative impact of these factors upon the representation of BAME groups in coach education and coach employment. Limited access to coach education and a lack of throughput of BAME coaches who do attain elite coaching qualifications was felt by a number of interviewees to maintain the underrepresentation of BAME coaches, particularly at the first-team level. The work of Cunningham has suggested that such factors have, in some instances, not had a negative impact on the aspirations of minority coaches in pursuing coaching as a career (2010). However, in this research a number of BAME coaches reported their perceptions on the ‘futility’ of undertaking coach education courses. These exclusionary processes were thus felt to ‘push’ some potential BAME coaches away from considering professional coaching as a viable career. A highly qualified BAME coach and manager summarised these contestations in drawing upon conversations he had within coach education settings;

“There was a Black coach, he’s a tv presenter now, he said to me, ‘why am I doing this?’ I said well you’ve got to do it do it to get your badge. He says ‘you’ve got every qualification in the world, you ain’t getting a job, what are we doing it for then? If you can’t get one how am I gonna get one.’ And that’s what people say, you ain’t getting a job, so why would I do my badges?” (BAME coach, Championship club)

6.3.2 Networks-based approaches to coach recruitment

Although some BAME coaches in this research spoke of taking part in a formal interview process which formed part of a competency-based framework of recruitment, such methods were felt to be relatively rare. Many interviews cited the existence of more informal recruitment methods which served to restrict access into positions of paid employment for some BAME coaches. Methods
such as headhunting and other targeted practices of recruitment were felt to be commonplace within professional football (and were often deemed favourable at the first-team level). In this respect, a number of interviewees contrasted professional football with other areas of society that were felt to have firmly established formalised recruitment practices which sought to equalise opportunities for prospective job candidates (Greene and Kirton, 2010). A BAME former manager now working for a key organisational stakeholder identified the unique ways in which he felt football coach recruitment at both tiers of the game continued to operate;

“You look at the recruitment process in football compared to teachers, public servants, public service where there’s a defined recruitment process, the post is advertised. Never done that in football, football’s almost like the last frontier, it does its own thing”

(BAME key organisational stakeholder)

On this score, many interviews cited the existence of networks-based recruitment methods. Whilst ‘old boy’ networks are argued to appear raceless to those who benefit from them (Dyer, 1997), these systems of social capital have been argued to frequently ‘reserve’ employment opportunities for White coaches in sport who benefit from a system of social networking among White males (Fletcher et al, 2014; Piggott, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005; Singer et al, 2005). Some BAME coaches in this research spoke of their own successful negotiation of these recruitment methods through connections to both White and BAME club gatekeepers, however this was felt to be a relatively rare occurrence. Many interviewees felt that BAME coaches were excluded from these networks as a result of racialised processes over the football life-course. Such processes have been argued to result in BAME coaches being less likely to have established long-term professional and personal relationships with White coaches (Bradbury et al, 2018). The comments of one BAME stakeholder provided a useful insight into the way these processes operated within a youth academy:

“I’d go around and look at academies and I’d see all White staff and I would say to the head of recruitment or academy manager, how do you manage to recruit your staff? And it’s as simple as whilst I was doing my
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qualifications, I did a coaching camp, I met so and so and when I got the job I rang him up and said do you fancy coming and working at this club? No interview process, no who’s the best person for the job, it’s my mate.” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Interviewees provided a number of examples of the ways in which networks-based methods of recruitment operated in the professional coaching industry. For example, the testimonies of many White club chief executives provided useful insights into how possessing ‘insider’ status within these networks proved advantageous within the first-team coaching job market. White club chief executives were particularly forthcoming participants in explaining the reliance on and preference for these methods of recruitment that were typically opaque and closed. For example, a White chief executive at a Championship club reflected on the ease of such recruitment methods;

“It’s much easier to phone up 3 other chief execs and say, what’s this guy like to work with or another coach and say, what’s the word on the street about this coach? If you’re not in those networks, it makes it harder to be appointed” (White club chief executive, Championship club)

Similarly, interviewees commented on how these causal methods favoured coaches with enhanced levels of reputational capital in the game. For example, a White chief executive at a League One club commented on the preference awarded to candidates who had established a previous relationship with club power brokers;

“It’s easier to hire someone that you know and you’ve had some contact with rather than hiring somebody that is totally new to you” (White club chief executive, League One club)

A number of BAME coaches and key stakeholders framed these taken for granted recruitment practices as creating a ‘cosiness’ in the appointment of first-team coaching staff in particular. One BAME coach who had previously coached at the first-team level for example described how there existed “a definite comfort factor in making appointments”. Amongst a number of BAME coaches the lack of transparency inherent to networks-based methods was felt to allow implicit or unconscious biases amongst senior decision makers who consciously or
unconsciously ‘naturally’ positioned White coaches as the preferred candidate to go unchallenged. This has been notably identified in homogenous organisational workforces which lack the ‘surveillance effects’ of cultural diversity in ‘checking’ such biases (Spaaij et al., 2019). Resultantly, coaches recruited were felt to regularly be of similar appearance to senior club decision makers and other senior coaching staff. For example, a BAME senior coach at a category two academy identified these patterns, and suggested the ‘racial’ closure these recruitment practices were likely to sustain;

“So if it’s not an open and transparent recruitment process, it becomes ‘we like him we’ll get him’. People, whether it’s unconscious bias, recruit in their own image” (BAME coach, category two academy)

At both the first team and youth academy levels of the game, these recruitment patterns were perceived by a number of BAME coaches to be exacerbated by the absence or brevity of job advertisements. Previous research has noted the absence of a ‘reasonable time frame’ in coach recruitment practices which is argued to deny or restrict the ability for a wide range of candidates to be seen and ‘become known’ amongst senior decision makers (Singer et al, 2005, p.286). In this research, a number of interviewees commented on the unequal outcomes of these vague and often tokenistic advertisement practices. For example, a key organisational stakeholder felt such practices favoured those coaches whom were already known to key power brokers in first-team and youth academy settings;

“Rather than do a proper recruitment process they’ll put it out but if somebody’s phoned up somebody and said yeah, put your CV in, apply for it, they’ll literally tell you you’ve got it” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

These improper advertisement practices are felt to promote quick, closed, and invisible hiring decisions which “limit and inhibit the ability of racial minorities to gain genuine opportunities to engage in the interview process” (Singer et al, 2005, p.286). In this respect, a number of interviewees felt that coaching vacancies were rarely vacancies at all, as they were hastily filled by coaches whom were familiar with the senior coaching hierarchies of youth academies and professional
clubs. A BAME coach in a category two academy felt that these processes served as a significant impediment in creating opportunities for BAME coaches to further their careers;

“I think the biggest issue in BAME coaches progressing in football is I feel a lot of the jobs are already filled before they’ve gone out for advertisement” (BAME coach, category two academy)

At the first-team level of professional clubs, normative recruitment models were felt to amplify the exclusionary outcomes of network-based methods of recruitment for BAME coaches. This was especially the case at first team level where newly appointed first-team managers were given control to appoint their own coaching staff, with the support of club senior decision makers. At the first team level interviewees reported that the appointment of a single manager often effectively resulted in the appointment of up to five or six coaching staff. The support coaching staff appointed were also felt by a number of interviewees to have personal and professional relationships with a newly appointed manager. For example, a White chief executive at a League Two club reflected;

“Often you appoint a manager and then there’s often a trust put in a manager to say well you go and appoint your coaching staff. And then it becomes well who does he know and who’s in his network” (White club chief executive, League Two club)

This was felt by several interviewees to create and strengthen a culture of trust between managers and coaches. Mirroring previous research, many interviewees spoke of the strength and longevity of these bonds between managers and the coaching staff they took with them between different clubs that had developed over the football life-course (Bradbury et al, 2018). Whilst some BAME coaches spoke of how their own professional and personal relationships they had formed with senior White (and BAME) coaches had on occasion resulted in employment, this remained a rarity in an arena underpinned by the social and cultural dominance of whiteness. These patterns were thus contended by some BAME coaches to effectively ‘lock out’ a number of BAME coaches from first team support coaching positions beyond head coach roles. A BAME key organisational stakeholder identified this feature amongst coaching set-ups in the game;
“It is a mate’s game football, you can have all the qualifications in the world, but my experience is coaches and managers take people that they’ve worked with before, people that they know and trust” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

A number of interviewees felt that the regular appointment of White managers regularly resulted in the appointment of White coaches, as these were often the groups who shared personal and professional relationships. In this sense, many interviewees identified the homologous reproduction of White coaching staff in the ways that senior decision-makers and coaching staff were felt to ‘reproduce themselves by hiring individuals who are similar to themselves physically and/or socially’ (Regan and Cunningham, 2012, p. 162). A BAME coach at a category two academy reflected on the negative implications of this for BAME coaches who had not established such relationships;

“The people that are getting employed are White, they bring in their own people. Same when they when go to another club, they’ll bring them in. You’ve got the culture in football of trust. So ‘I know what you’re about and you know what I’m expecting, so we’re cool’… You don’t actually ever break that bubble” (BAME coach, category two academy)

For a number of interviewees these normative recruitment patterns were felt to restrict opportunities for BAME coaches to gain valuable coaching experience necessary to secure paid employment. Previous research has identified a lack of elite coaching experience amongst BAME coaches, instead noting how BAME coaches are caught in a cycle of ‘lacking sufficient experience of coaching elite level players to be considered for posts at professional clubs whilst simultaneously being denied opportunities to gain experience at clubs of this kind’ (SPTT, 2014, p. 16). At the first-team level a number of White club chief executives identified a ‘chicken and egg’ scenario facing BAME coaches. The negative outcomes of a lack of experience amongst BAME coaches could be seen in the comments of the following White chief executives at League One and League Two clubs;

“The lack of experience with a lot of them, it’s the chicken and egg. They’re not gonna get the experience without being given a chance, but they’re
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_"not getting a chance because they haven’t got the experience"_ (White club chief executive, League Two club)

_“It’s that age-old difficulty of do you want someone with experience, how do they get experience? It’s relying on somebody taking a punt on someone”_ (White Club chief executive, Championship club)

The outcomes of these issues discussed in relation to networks-based methods of recruitment were felt by a number of BAME coaches to represent a ‘catch 22’ situation in relation to their lack of employment and experiential opportunities. Owing to their positions on the periphery of dominant social and cultural networks, several BAME coaches felt that they lacked the experience and ‘trustworthiness’ possessed by White coaches with increased levels of relevant social capital. For some, this was felt to result in their own chances of securing first-team coach employment ultimately becoming dependent on what they felt was the uncommon event of a senior decision maker ‘breaking the mould’ by offering a relatively inexperienced BAME coach an opportunity. This was expressed by several highly qualified BAME coaches who noted the regularity with which their applications for first-team coaching roles were met with questions of their experience. A BAME coach at a category three academy reflected on this below;

_“They’ll always come back to you, ‘you’re not experienced enough’, so it’s at some point who’s gonna start giving these guys opportunities to gain the experience?”_ (BAME coach, category 3 academy)

6.3.3 Racial bias and stereotypes in coach recruitment

Some interviewees in this research spoke of the absence or rarity of overt and intentional racisms within first team and youth academy coaching environments. This was particularly the case at the first-team level, where explicit and intentional examples of prejudice were largely perceived by White club chief executives as a relic of the past. However, the perceived absence of these readily identifiable forms of racial bias does not necessarily preclude the existence of more nuanced but no less harmful forms of racial bias, or indeed overt forms of racisms (Bradbury, 2013; Bradbury et al, 2018; Cunningham, 2010; Fassao and Massing, 2010; Sartore and Cunningham, 2006). A number of interviewees referenced the continued existence of racial bias in first team and youth academy coaching.
environments. For example, some BAME coaches perceived the existence of racialised micro-aggressions within coach recruitment processes. These are argued to be “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group” (Sue et al, 2007, p. 23 in Burdsey, 2011). In this research, the perceptions of several BAME coaches demonstrated the work of Davis, who considers micro-aggressions as ‘automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes’ (1988, p.1576).

This was in the way that some interviewees reported a scepticism amongst senior decision-makers within recruitment processes which they felt was linked to their ‘racial’ identity. For example, a BAME coach at a category two academy reported the perceptions he left a recent recruitment process with;

“Yes he’s a really good player but has he got the skills to manage people? Is that about the colour of his skin?” (BAME coach, category two academy)

Relatedly, other interviewees reported the existence of stereotypes within coach recruitment processes and coaching workplaces. These stereotypes were felt to manifest in a number of ways and to be used as a form of institutional power to restrict the access and mobility of BAME coaches into and within the professional coaching industry. For some interviewees, there was a transference of physical and cerebral stereotypes around BAME players into the coaching arena. As illustrated by the ‘stacking’ phenomenon (Maguire, 1988; Melnick, 1998), these stereotypes gained traction in previous decades and were drawn from deeply inscribed narratives within sport around the ‘natural’ propensities of BAME groups (Hylton, 2009). In this research, a number of interviews perceived the residual presence of these cerebral stereotypes amongst senior decision makers. For example, a BAME coach at a category two academy felt that these ideas continued to influence the potential career trajectories of BAME coaches at both levels of the game;

“So the stereotypes would be like, oh they're not very clever. We as coaches are going through what the players in the 60’s and 70’s was going through. So you used to get players that could never go in goal or be the centre of midfield, it had to be in the position where if you’ve gave the ball away it was in an attacking position or on the wing, because you were quick. Brains were never seen to be something that we would be able to
possess and that was a stereotype of how it was. Definitely we’re still going through that right now” (BAME coach, category two academy)

Similar perceptions were held by other interviewees who felt that, as players, BAME groups were regularly absent from on-pitch leadership roles. Previous research has highlighted the ‘lack of appointment of BME players as team captains and limited opportunities to formally exhibit key qualities of leadership and authority’ (SPTT, 2014, P. 16). This was felt by a number of interviewees to result in BAME coaches being less likely to be thought of as potential coaches and managers within the game, and consequently hinder potential opportunities for future employment. A BAME coach at a category three academy made links between these factors and the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in the game, as he commented;

“I think sometimes the underrepresentation stems from the roles that they’ve played on the pitch, and whether they’re seen in sort of leadership positions” (BAME coach, category three academy)

Linked to these ideas, research has identified the impacts of leadership stereotypes on the opportunities available for coaches of colour in North American elite sport (Cunningham, 2010). This work has identified how historic racialised processes have positioned White groups as more effective leaders in the minds of decision-makers (Rosette et al, 2008). This work has also noted that, unlike White coaches, prevailing stereotypes around BAME groups in the professional sport coaching industry are often ‘inconsistent with the characteristics believed necessary to successfully fulfil a managerial role’ (Sartore and Cunningham, 2006, p. 70). In this research, interviewees felt that prevailing beliefs around which characteristics constituted successful managers and coaches was sometimes oppositional to common attitudinal stereotypes around BAME coaches. This was felt to create a sense of mistrust around BAME coaches and a scepticism towards their ability to hold management and leadership roles. For example, a BAME coach at a category one academy reflected on the impact of attitudinal stereotypes on the perceived suitability of BAME groups for coaching roles;

“100% there’s stereotypes. Too laid back, sometimes maybe too
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*aggressive, maybe not what they want at that club*” (BAME coach, category one academy)

Other interviewees similarly felt that their coaching abilities were undermined by stereotypical views around their (assumed) cultural identity. The work of Bradbury et al has previously alluded to the tendency of senior decision makers in men’s professional football clubs in England to conceptualise BAME coaches in terms of their perceived ‘ethnic and cultural traits rather than in relation to their realized technical abilities and experiences as coaches’ (2018, p. 325). Davis has suggested similar negative conceptualisations of BAME groups premised upon a crude and misplaced association between perceived ethnicity and ability (1995). A number of interviewees perceived these issues in regard to the names of some BAME coaches. This was exemplified by a BAME coach who perceived the presence of racial biases in the early stages of recruitment processes where crude associations between names, ethnicity and ability were felt to be formed;

“Before they’ve even met you or have seen you coach, there can be stereotypes of where you’re from and what kind of attitude you’ll have as a coach based on the name you’ve got.” (BAME coach, category two academy)

At the first-team level specifically, these issues were felt to be compounded by the high pressure and ‘hire and fire’ culture of this arena (LMA, 2018). A number of interviewees perceived a sense of risk attached to BAME managers in this regard by senior decision-makers who doubted the ability of these individual to lead their first-teams. This prejudice was felt to be compounded by the lower levels of social capital possessed by a number of BAME coaches, which was ultimately felt to position them as an ‘unknown quantity’ in the minds of senior decision makers. This was exemplified by the White club chief executive of a Championship club, who felt that BAME coaches continued to be subject to conscious and unconscious prejudices, as he commented below;

“I think within the game there is definitely a subconscious prejudice about BAME candidates and their ability to take managerial roles” (White club chief executive, Championship club)

Taken together, a number of interviews felt the outcomes of these issues were
continuing inopportunity for highly qualified BAME coaches. The presence of a range of racial biases and stereotypes, and, significantly, the absence of any challenge to or neutralisation of these perspectives in homogeneous coaching workplaces, was felt to undermine the professional abilities of BAME coaches. In this sense, a number of interviewees felt that senior decision-makers consciously or unconsciously subscribed to and reinforced Tomkiewicz et al’s ‘manager as White typology’ (1998). This notion posits that Whiteness is the institutional norm within the professional sports coaching industry, which simultaneously normalises ideas of coaches as White whilst alienating ideas of coaches as BAME. These thought processes were felt to embedded in the ways in which senior decision makers scrutinised coaches for roles. This was reflected on by a BAME coach at a category three academy below:

“There’s talk of the racism in football that people don’t sit back and call themselves racist, but actually when it comes to looking at how they recruit and how they vet people for roles and responsibilities they don’t actually realise they are being racist. When it comes to selecting someone for a job they look at people slightly different, by the colour of their skin” (BAME coach, category 2 academy)

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to describe the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England and examine the experiences of BAME coaches in securing positions of paid employment. In doing so, this chapter sought to answer the first research question of this thesis. Firstly, this chapter analysed the representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England. At the senior first-team level, this chapter drew on secondary data to illustrate the historic and continuing underrepresentation (and narrow distribution) of BAME coaches in senior first-team coaching positions. At the youth academy level, these patterns were largely reflected, as secondary data illustrated the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in senior youth academy coaching positions. Across all youth academy coaching positions, primary data indicated an improved representation of BAME coaches which far outstripped statistics at the first-team level. However, BAME coaches were found to be overrepresented
in part-time positions at the youth academy level, and, mirroring first-team patterns, were found to be employed in a narrow distribution of academies, largely concentrated around the Midlands and London. Taken together, this chapter found that there existed patterns of occupational segregation in the professional game as a whole, as BAME coaches were most frequently represented in coaching positions furthest away from the most senior first-team positions. Secondly, this chapter examined the experiences of BAME coaches in attempting to secure employment in youth academy and first-team coaching positions. This section identified the existence of a number of racialised barriers at the youth academy and first-team level which served to negatively impact on the career trajectories of BAME coaches. Informed by previous research and existing literature, limited access to elite level coach education, networks-based approaches to coach recruitment and racial bias and stereotypes in coach recruitment were all argued to underpin racially inequitable experiences and outcomes. These barriers are not argued to act upon BAME managers and coaches in isolation, rather it is contended that they operate in a complex configuration to structure the accessibility and progression attainable for BAME coaches and managers within first team and youth academy coaching environments. Despite their obstructive outcomes, these barriers were argued to be embedded in the everyday operations of professional football coach recruitment and woven into the normative attitudinal approaches of key decision makers. This thesis now turns to an analysis of the impacts and effectiveness of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment in addressing these institutionalised forms of discrimination.
7 Analysis of the EFL mandatory code of coach recruitment

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the English Football League’s (EFL) mandatory code of coach recruitment within professional club youth academies (hereafter referred as academies) and will partially answer the second research question of this thesis. The chapter will broadly comprise three areas relating to the mandatory code; context, implementation and effectiveness. In doing so, it will draw on data from an online survey of academy managers as and semi-structured interviews with BAME coaches, academy managers and key organisational stakeholders. Firstly, the chapter will contextualise the code. This will begin with a brief exploration of the academy system of men’s professional football in England, which will outline the coaching infrastructure and some common characteristics of academies. Secondly, this chapter will examine the practical implementation of the mandatory code. This will begin with an outlining of the detail of the code, before examining its development and implementation at the national level. This section will also analyse the code’s central features in relation to the equality models and approaches outlined in chapter four. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the effectiveness of the mandatory code. This will analyse the procedural implementation of the code and its efficacy in establishing formalised four-step recruitment processes which contain advertisements, applications, interviews and appointments.

7.2 Professional club youth academy coaching environments

The English Football League’s (EFL) mandatory code of coach recruitment applies within the academy systems of the 72 professional football clubs which play in the EFL; comprising tiers two, three and four of the professional football pyramid in England. Of the 72 professional football clubs to play in these leagues, 69 currently have an academy system. The academy system is the youth departments of men’s professional football clubs in England, which usually
includes players between the ages of 9 and 21. All academies in English football are subject to the regulations of the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP), a strategic comprehensive approach to youth football development established by the English Premier League (EPL), in conjunction with the Football Association (FA). The introduction of the EPPP brought several changes to the format and scope of the academy system. A major effect of the EPPP has been the introduction of category statuses; rankings afforded to academies through a criteria-based system of quality assurance. There are four categories that academies may be classified into. Category one academies represent the highest status of academy and category four academies are the most limited. Categories one to three have players registered from the under nine age group (or lower) through to the professional stage where youth players effectively ‘graduate’ to sign initial contracts at the senior level of professional clubs. Category one clubs also have a ‘senior’ professional development phase which extends to u23 level; a team which requires extra coaching positions. Category four academies are different in that they are a ‘late development model‘ (EFL, 2018), whereby academies focus only on the under seventeen age group and above. The category status attained by club academies is based on a system of assessment which takes into account various factors, such as facilities and financial resources (EFL, 2018). The majority of academies within the 72 EFL clubs are category 2 and 3 (EFL, 2018). Although there are exceptions, category 1 and 2 EFL academies are predominantly found in clubs which play in the Championship (tier 2 of the professional football pyramid), whilst category 3 and 4 EFL academies are predominantly found in clubs which play in League One and League Two (tiers 3 and 4 of the professional football pyramid).

The coaching structure and personnel of academies are largely comparable across all 69 Football League academies, with any differences stemming from the category status a club possesses. The typical academy coaching workforce represents a hierarchical structure commonly found within elite sporting environments. These coaching workforces are headed by an academy manager or academy director (often interchangeable terms). This role is predominantly a management role which oversees all academy departments and develops academy policy and strategy. With regards to coach recruitment academy
managers have a central role in the recruitment of other full-time senior coaching positions in the academy, such as assistant academy managers and heads of coaching; positions which are also predominantly managerial. Beneath these positions are a variety of more ‘on-pitch’ coaching positions. The most senior of these positions are called phase lead coaches, which oversee specific developmental phases within the academy that are categorised by age group. These are the foundation phase (under 9 to under 11), youth phase (under 12 to under 16) and professional/senior professional phase (under 17 to under 21/under 23). Phase lead coaches are usually appointed by either academy managers or heads of coaching and tend to be employed on a full-time basis. Within each of these phases are a team for each age group, each of which have a manager who is then supported by multiple full-time, part-time or sessional coaches, depending on the category status of an academy and its available resources. Age group team managers and their coaching staff generally tend to be appointed by the phase lead coaches in which their teams correspond to.

7.3 The EFL mandatory code of coach recruitment

The mandatory code was introduced into EFL academies at the beginning of the 2016/17 men’s professional football season in England. The code contains five principles which academies are required to adhere to when appointing coaching staff to vacant positions (EFL, 2016). These principles are outlined below;

- Clubs will be required to advertise any position within the club’s Academy that requires the individual to hold a UEFA A or UEFA B coaching badge on the club’s website and the EFL website for a minimum of 7 days.
- Clubs must include at least one suitably qualified BAME candidate (where an application has been received) on the interview shortlist for that position.
- Clubs must appoint the successful candidate on the basis of merit alone.
- Clubs must provide details of the recruitment process to the EFL, including the number of BAME applicants and the number of BAME candidates interviewed.
- Clubs will be permitted to fill a position by promoting an internal candidate
(from a position requiring a UEFA A or B coaching badge only) without applying the above process. However, the position vacated by that individual must be filled in accordance with the new regulations.

The mandatory code constitutes a form of positive action in the way it encourages ‘service providers to take action that may involve treating one group more favourably where this is a proportionate way to help members of that group overcome a disadvantage or participate more fully’ (UK Government Equalities Office, 2010). In this sense, the code is an example of a harder variant of liberal equality which sits closer to ensuring equality of outcome as opposed to equality of opportunity (Bagilhole, 1997; Forbes, 1991; Lusted, 2014). This is in the way the code seeks to forcibly ensure BAME coaches participate in formalised recruitment processes; seemingly a tacit admission, as some scholars may argue, that the code recognises that the ‘widely held normative assumption that sport is inherently fair and accessible to all’ is a myth (Lusted, 2017, p. 16). The mandatory code, on the surface at least, presents a challenge to the ‘powerful associations between sport and meritocracy’ which have been argued to traditionally impede the development of equality approaches which go beyond merely rhetorical commitments (Dixon et al, 2016; Lusted, 2011; Hylton, 2015; Randhawa, 2012). For CRT scholars, the differential treatment embedded within the code seemingly meets calls for interventionist and redistributive measure which seek to undo the injustices of the past and the present. That said, the guarantee of an interview alone for suitably qualified candidates means that ‘a rule of this nature only gets an individual to the door. It is up to that individual to walk through the door and prove they are the best candidate for the position’ (Pike, 2011, p.54).

7.3.1 The national development and implementation of the mandatory code

Interviewees indicated that unlike the Rooney Rule which served as the code’s inspiration, consultation and development of the mandatory code appeared to remain at the ‘organisational level’. The rule’s development appeared to be confined to the hierarchies of the EFL, with support from the NFL and other key organisational stakeholders. Conversations with interviewees around their knowledge of the inception of the mandatory code suggested that those
implementing the code ‘on the ground’ (academy managers) and the intended beneficiaries of the code (BAME coaches) were not consulted on the code’s development. Although it was developed however in consultation with other key stakeholders in the game, including players’ representatives via the PFA.

This development was evident in the way the mandatory code appeared to be communicated as a non-negotiable ‘instruction’ to academies. Previous research has problematised the hierarchical implementation of equality policy (Bagilhole, 2006). For example, Shaw identifies how the ‘top-down’ implementation of equality policies not limits ‘the potential for individuals within organisations to engage with future concepts of equality and promoting it in their organisations’, but also creates the impression of equality through ‘imposition’ (2007, p. 428). A number of academy managers reported this sense of imposition, with little dialogue or accompanying contextual information from the EFL as to the underpinning reasons for the code’s existence or its long-term objectives. A White academy manager at a category three academy indicated this as he commented on his passivity in the introduction of the mandatory code to his academy;

“They’ve asked us all to do it and, you know, to be honest with you when my chief executive says to me we’re gonna do this then we do it” (Academy manager, category 3 academy)

Similarly, another White academy manager at a category three academy spoke of the way in which the mandatory code was implemented from ‘above’;

“Yeah certainly at our club it was a rule from the Football League end and apparently it wasn’t a choice, everybody had to do it” (Academy manager, category 3 academy)

These quotes reflected the perspectives of other academy managers who reported that the mandatory code appeared to be ‘parachuted’ in. In this sense, the development of the mandatory code appeared to miss important opportunities to include relevant organisational members in the development of equality policy (Bagilhole, 2006; Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Shaw, 2007). Such ‘one-way’ mechanisms of development and implementation between the EFL and club academies excluded any notion, or benefits, of an ‘educational’ approach to policy development argued for by Ely and Thomas in their discussion of the role
of racial equality in engendering cultural diversity (2001). The benefits of which are identified in the work of Long et al who note the significance of training and education regarding the successful understanding and implementation of equality policies (2005). Again, these themes were present in the views of some BAME coaches who queried the levels of organisational buy-in encouraged by the methods in which the mandatory code was developed and implemented by the EFL. On this score, one BAME senior coach at a category two academy commented;

‘If you tell me to do something, I’m probably going to be resentful. If you give me the knowledge and understanding and open my eyes, I may be more likely to comply to it.’ (BAME coach, category 2 academy)

Without these supplementary strategies to policy development and implementation, it is argued that policy becomes reliant on basic quantitative results and embodies limited meaning for organisational members and those delivering policy ‘on the ground’ (Acker, 2000; Shaw and Penney, 2003). This previous research points to the need for policy makers to consider that policy implementers may need assistance about contextualising, understanding and valuing policies, however in the strategy adopted by EFL they appeared to work on an assumption that those implementing the code did not require support ahead of the code’s delivery.

7.3.2 The communication of the mandatory code

Such a narrow approach to policy development places extra stress on the importance of clarity and detail in the communication of policy to organisational members. The lack of lucidity concerning relationships between sports organisations previously identified in the implementation of equality policy in sport emerged as a theme in discussions with interviewees (particularly academy managers) around the mandatory code’s content. Academy managers reported multiple platforms and multiple stages through which the code was communicated. The vast majority of academies reported that the EFL informed them directly of the code’s introduction, however one academy reported receiving information from another unspecified source. Furthermore, the majority of academies (81.8%) reported they were informed about the code at least one
month in advance of the start of the 2016/17 season, however some academies (18.2%) reported that they were not aware of the code until, at the earliest, a month after the start of the 2016/17 season. In terms of the dissemination of the code and its content, club chief executives, academy managers and HR departments were all reported as initial points of contact when the EFL notified academies of the code’s introduction. This contact was reported across several mediums, such as league meetings, emails and written documentation. Research has suggested the negative implications on the embeddedness of policy arising from a mix of formal and informal mechanisms of communication both from overarching organisations and within member groups (Houlihan and Green, 2009; Shaw, 2007). These issues were evident in the varying ideas of a number of academy managers as to what the mandatory code actually constituted. This could be seen in the number of academy managers who effectively framed the mandatory code as a form of positive discrimination. This was in their belief of the code’s potential to result in unqualified coaches receiving interviews or even securing employment; the antithesis of the code’s objectives. For example, an academy manager at a category three academy felt the mandatory code could result in ‘unqualified’ coaches securing employment:

“If they’re getting it just because they’re a BAME candidate but they’re nowhere near good enough to do the job from their CV and experience perspective then I’m not sure if it is good” (Academy manager, category 3 academy)

Similarly, another academy manager at a category three academy felt the code would force him to hire a candidate regardless of their qualifications and experiences;

“I wouldn’t be a fan of positively doing something despite the CV. I wouldn’t want to get someone in knowing their CV hasn’t got the required pre-requisites” (Academy manager, category 3 academy)

These ideologies have previously been identified within attitudes towards positive action measures (Bagilhole, 1997), whereby those deemed to benefit from measures are regarded as ‘underserving’. It is argued that the informal, assumptive and inconsistent approach to the communication and implementation
of the mandatory code by the EFL did not help to ‘correct’ such discourses of incompetence (Heilman, 1994). Without accompanying training or clear methods of communication to clarify the code, the imposition of the mandatory code within academies appeared to lack a sensitivity to the prevailing liberal ideologies of meritocracy and colour-blindness argued to characterise professional coaching environments (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016).

The relatively concentrated pool of organisations and groups consulted with in the development of the mandatory code appeared to underpin mixed levels of awareness amongst BAME coaches; a feature not uncommon to previous equality policies and charters within sport (Shaw, 2007). Spracklen et al have previously noted in this regard a social and cultural distance between the predominantly White hierarchies within sports organisations and BAME groups, making calls for sports bodies to ‘develop better links’ with BAME groups (2005, p.48). This appeared to be reflected in how some BAME coaches perceived feeling ‘out of the loop’ in their lack of awareness of the code’s existence and principles, despite being the intended beneficiaries of this equality policy. For example, the lack of awareness of the code amongst a number of BAME coaches was reflected in the following quote from a BAME coach at a category four academy;

“I’m not aware of these codes. Does a scheme like this really exist if no one knows about it?” (BAME coach, category 3 academy)

As also illustrated in chapter 6, the development, implementation and communication of the mandatory code appeared to reflect how BAME groups are on the margins of ‘the sporting networks; they are not part of the established (White) sporting communities” (Long et al, 2005, p.48). Other coaches were aware of the code. However, their knowledge of the code’s core features or the potential opportunities it provided to them appeared to be piecemeal. For example, a BAME coach at a category two academy commented;

“Is there like a minimum of black and ethnic minority coaches per club? Or something like that. I don’t know too much about it to be honest” (BAME coach, category 2 academy)

Cognisant of these patterns of development, implementation and communication,
this chapter now turns to an examination of the procedural implementation of the mandatory code, and its effectiveness in challenging some of the normative recruitment practices outlined in the previous chapter.

7.4 The procedural implementation of the mandatory code in youth academies

Data in this section is drawn from the online quantitative survey conducted with academy managers of EFL youth academies (N=23) and qualitative semi-structured interviews undertaken with BAME coaches, academy managers and organisational stakeholders (N=35). Specifically, this data will be used to examine the adherence to and effectiveness of the mandatory code from a procedural standpoint. In doing so, this section will focus upon four interconnected aspects of the code; advertisements, applications, interviews and appointments.

7.4.1 Advertisements

Limited advertising of coaching roles has been argued to be a form of access discrimination, in the way that such advertisement processes ‘prevent members of a particular group from entering a job, organization, or profession’ (Cunningham and Sagas, 2005, p.149). Such narrow advertisement of roles is contended to reproduce the ethnic and cultural composition of coaching workforces by restricting knowledge of coaching roles to those within dominant social, cultural and organisational networks. Survey and interview data suggested that during the 2016/17 season the mandatory code had a largely positive impact in formalising the recruitment practices of academies. This could be seen in the number of academies to adhere to the mandatory code’s requirement for roles to be publicly advertised. Figure 7.1 below presents data on the methods of advertisement used by academies during the 2016/17 for coaching roles which required a UEFA B license or above.
This table illustrates that the public advertisement of roles was the most popular form of advertisement, indeed all 21 academies to have coaching vacancies during the 2016/17 season reported publicly advertising coaching roles. However, this figure was slightly tempered by the number of academies to publicly advertise roles in conjunction with – rather than instead of – other informal methods. 15 academies reported the internal advertisement of roles to current staff (65%) (a method permitted under the mandatory code), whilst 10 academies reported utilising ‘word of mouth’ and personal recommendations to advertise their roles (44%). This suggests that the mandatory code has encouraged the formal advertisement of roles, yet not at the expense of informal methods which appear to continue to be in operation. Despite this, a number of interviewees recognised that more formal recruitment methods had become embedded within academy recruitment practices as a result of the mandatory code’s implementation. For example, a BAME academy manager at a category three academy reflected on these procedural changes;

“We would have stuck to a couple of sites in the past, UK Sport and maybe our website. Whereas now we’d probably go a bit further afield, you’d do it on the EFL website now because you have to. We probably wouldn’t have done that before, so it’s probably given it a bit more exposure” (BAME
A White academy manager at a category two academy reflected on the positive implications of this requirement in regard to dismantling networks-based methods of recruitment;

“Actually because of that intervention the jobs now go on the EFL website which I’d say is a massive step forward in the fact that probably 18 months ago before this came in that never happened. I’d agree to an extent that before it was like the jobs for the boys type thing; ‘oh I know him, I used to play with him’ or ‘he worked with me in my last club’ type of thing.” (White academy manager, category 2 academy)

Previous research has highlighted recruitment practices in sport coaching which are typically ‘informal, closed and lacking transparency’ (Fletcher et al, 2014, p. 3). Such methods are argued to limit awareness of job vacancies to those with prior personal and professional relationships with senior decision-makers (Fletcher et al, 2014; Piggott, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005). A number of interviewees felt that the formal public advertisement of roles would ‘open up’ recruitment processes, which would enable more BAME coaches to become aware of jobs and apply accordingly. This was suggested by a BAME coach at a category two academy;

“If it’s being advertised, people are more aware of the jobs and they can apply. So that then will increase the number of people that apply for the jobs.” (BAME coach, category 2 academy)

For a number of interviewees, just as important as the public advertisement of coaching roles was the mediums through which these coaching roles were advertised. The mandatory code requires academies to publicly advertise roles on their own website and the ‘jobs’ section of the EFL website. On this score, Figure 7.2 below illustrates where academies advertised coaching roles during the 2016/17 season that required a UEFA B coaching licence or above.
The table indicates that academies publicly advertised coaching positions on a range of platforms during the 2016/17 season. The most widely used location was academies’ own websites. All but one academy reported advertising positions on their own website (95%), as is required by the mandatory code. However, only 14 academies reported that they advertised roles on the EFL’s jobs website (66%), as is also required by the code. This suggested an inconsistent adherence to this feature of the code across academies, however the advertisement of positions on other platforms implied that clubs sought to increase the exposure of coaching vacancies. For example, the table illustrates that a sizeable number of academies advertised roles on the FA Licensed Coaches Club website (62%), a prominent coaching jobs database. Furthermore, many academies reported advertising roles on other platforms, including UK Sport, general job vacancy databases and social media outlets (66%) – all of which were platforms BAME coaches reported engaging with. Many interviewees felt that such a diverse range of advertisement locations increased the exposure of job vacancies, particularly for some marginalised BAME who were on the periphery of inner circles and insider networks. For example, a BAME coach at a category one academy commented on the perceived opportunities brought about through the public advertising of academy coaching roles in different places:
“Advertising a job in multiple places obviously builds the opportunity for others.” (BAME coach, category 1 academy)

Similarly, a BAME key organisational stakeholder felt that the public advertisement of roles had the potential to challenge the networks-based methods of recruitment that he felt typified recruitment practices before the mandatory code’s introduction;

“The clubs will be seeing candidates that they might not have seen before. They’ll maybe have seen 3 or 4 that are on their radar because they’re within their networks, and those networks won’t necessarily include other people of other ethnicities. So, because of that (rule), they’ll see other talent.” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

In this sense, the mandatory code’s requirement for academies to publicly advertise roles on multiple platforms appears to present opportunities to empower those groups (BAME coaches) outside of dominant social and cultural networks. To this end, these quotes implied that knowledge of job vacancies no longer remained a ‘closed shop’.

Research has outlined the significance of a reasonable time frame when advertising positions. An appropriate period of time in which to advertise positions and allow candidates to compose an application is argued to provide opportunities for marginalised groups to engage in interview processes and potentially secure paid employment (Singer et al, 2010). Survey and interview data suggest that the implementation of the mandatory code within academies has encouraged a reasonable time frame in which applicants may apply for roles and key decision makers may identify and interview a diverse range of candidates. This was indicated by a significant number of clubs who reported publicly advertising positions for a period of at least 7 days. Figure 7.3 provides data on the length of time academies publicly advertised for during the 2016/17 season for coaching roles requiring a UEFA B licence or above.
All academies adhered to the mandatory code’s requirement for coaching positions to be publicly advertised coaching positions for at least 7 days. Some BAME coaches felt that the 7-day minimum period for job advertisements was not a sufficient time period in which to apply for coaching positions. However, the table also shows that 95% of academies went beyond this minimum requirement, with nearly 40% of academies publicly advertising roles for at least 14 days. These figures suggest that the mandatory has engendered positive procedural change in this respect. Qualitative data served to reaffirm these quantitative indications. The encouragement of a minimum advertisement period was felt by a number of interviewees to increase the opportunities for coaches of all ethnicities to seek out job opportunities and prepare more competitive applications. For example, a BAME coach at a category one academy commented:

“Sometimes you see a job and you want to go away and think about how you’re gonna apply for that particular job and how you’re gonna edit your CV or how you’re gonna edit your cover letter and that might take some individuals longer… I think it’s definitely fair and definitely important to have that time period” (BAME coach, category 1 academy)
An appropriate time in which to become aware of a vacancy and submit a competitive application has been argued to benefit all applicants, regardless of ethnicity (Turban and Cable, 2003; Rynes et al, 1991). However it is argued that the significance of a suitable period in which to find and apply for coaching roles is amplified for BAME coaches, who, unlike a number of White coaches, may not be able to rely on increased levels of social capital to work in tandem with any application (Singer et al, 2005). In this sense, this increased time frame in which to advertise positions arguably increases opportunities for BAME coaches who are on the periphery of the dominant social and cultural networks of the professional coaching industry. This also arguably disrupts the privileges afforded to White coaches, the recruitment of whom has often been sustained by closed and quick recruitment decisions.

7.4.2 Applications

It has been argued that the numbers of applications for job roles are dependent upon the interplay between the pool of viable (qualified) candidates and the levels of encouragement targeted towards potential applicants (Chelladurai, 2006; Singer et al, 2010). Despite the increased frequency with which academies publicly advertised coaching roles and the multiple mediums through which they did so, these factors did not appear to have a significant impact upon the numbers of applications from BAME candidates. Survey and interview data revealed relatively low levels of applications from BAME candidates for coaching roles requiring a UEFA B licence or above. Figure 7.4 below provides data on the applications received from candidates of all ethnicities for relevant coaching positions in the first year of the mandatory code’s implementation.
The table illustrates that 424 applications were submitted for coaching roles during the 2016/17 season. There were 384 applications from White coaches (91%), and 40 applications from BAME coaches (9%). The vast majority of applications for full-time positions came from White coaches (94%). However, this imbalance was less extreme for part-time positions, where BAME coaches accounted for over a fifth of all applications for these roles (21%). In regard to the number of academies who received applications from BAME coaches, 18 of the 21 academies to have vacant coaching positions during the 2016/17 season received applications from BAME coaches (86%). There was a relatively thin distribution of applications from BAME coaches to these academies, as 62% of academies received no more than 3 applications from BAME candidates. Of all academies to receive applications from BAME candidates, 40% were academies based in London or the Midlands. The regional breakdown of BAME applications was particularly significant as for several academy managers, there was a belief that in their region that the pool of BAME coaches with requisite qualifications was not large enough to fully exploit the mandatory code’s potential opportunities.

As illustrated in chapter 3, these assertions are likely to be true in some locales as data indicates that BAME coaches are largely underrepresented in the possession of coaching qualifications requisite to take advantage of the mandatory code’s ‘interview guarantee’ (SPTT, 2015). Coach education forms a
fundamental part of the coaching ‘pipeline’ in men’s professional football in England, and the lower numbers of highly qualified BAME coaches will be an underlying factor in these low levels of applications from BAME coaches. For example, a White academy manager at a category two academy felt that there were lower numbers of qualified BAME candidates who could benefit from the mandatory code in his locale;

“In terms of the key criteria for (BAME) people who would be eligible and be realistic to do the roles, a lot of it comes down to they just haven’t got the experience or the qualifications to meet the mandatory criteria” (White academy manager, category 2 academy)

Notwithstanding, some interviewees felt that the underrepresentation of BAME groups in coach education was an oversimplification of why there were far lower numbers of applications from BAME coaches. A number of interviewees felt that low levels of awareness of the mandatory code served to restrict the numbers of applications from BAME coaches for relevant coaching qualifications. Previous research has identified the ways in which the peripheral position occupied by some BAME coaches in the dominant social and cultural networks of the professional coaching industry limits the knowledge available to them (Fletcher et al, 2014; Norman et al, 2014). A number of BAME coaches felt that the potential interview opportunities offered by the code remained out of sight and would do for the foreseeable future unless awareness of the code increased amongst BAME coaches. For example, one BAME coach in a senior position at a category four status academy noted;

“I think it will (increase applications) but I don’t think you will see that until the next 2, 3 years and the only reason I say that is again cause it goes back to have they actually got the word out, do Black and ethnic minority coaches know about this rule?” (BAME coach, category 4 academy)

Similarly, another BAME coach at a category one status academy emphasised the relationship between awareness of the code and applications to academies from BAME coaches;

“I think it would definitely increase applications just if BAME coaches know
For a number of (predominantly younger) BAME coaches, the mandatory code was framed as a ‘stimulant’ that would make them more likely to apply for coaching roles in light of the ‘interview guarantee’ it provided. However, a small but significant number of (relatively older) BAME coaches expressed scepticism towards the code’s potential efficacy, and therefore reflected that the mandatory code did little to alter their frequency and optimism with which they engaged in club academy recruitment processes. These coaches situated the code in the wider historical context of the lack of targeted approaches to challenge the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in English professional football. In this regard, the code was framed as ‘tokenistic’ due to a perception that the code’s implementation and regulation remained subject to the underlying mindsets and attitudes of academy decision-making personnel. On this note, one BAME coach at a category one status academy reflected;

“For people like myself who do see light at the end of the tunnel, we think it’s great. But for some, I don’t see it changing their minds. You’re going to get a certain few that are going to embrace it, and you’re going to have others who are still of the mindset that it’s an even bigger waste of time because until you can influence the mindsets of people making the decisions, all these types of things will have no importance” (BAME coach, category one academy)

A BAME key organisational stakeholder with coaching experience at a category three academy expressed a similar sense of apathy towards the code’s ability to engender procedural change;

“I’ve been around for some time in the football world and you see the campaigns that are going to supposedly make a difference to people and then time goes on and it’s another campaign, and you almost become immune to it. It’s almost like Groundhog Day sometimes” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

This line of thinking framed the willingness to fully implement the mandatory code as tokenistic and gestural; sentiments amongst minority groups not unique to this particular equality policy (Singer et al, 2010). These comments spoke to a
common frustration amongst a number of BAME coaches. This frustration was underpinned by beliefs that the mandatory code’s implementation was controlled by the same academy personnel whose pre-existing recruitment methods at least partially created the code’s necessity. As such, several BAME coaches subscribed to Lorde’s notion that ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’ (Lorde, 2018). These perspectives were somewhat compounded by a lack of consultation with BAME coaches in the mandatory code’s development and the lack of regulated monitoring and sanctions from the EFL regarding the code’s implementation.

7.4.3 Interviews

Formal interviews have been argued to be a consistently absent feature of recruitment processes in professional sport (Bradbury et al, 2018; Finch et al, 2010). This is contended to deny crucial opportunities ‘for members of historically marginalized racial groups to interview and showcase their talents and abilities’ (Singer et al, 2010). Survey and interview data indicated a positive relationship between the number of applications from BAME coaches and the number of interviews awarded to BAME coaches during the 2016/17 season. On this score, Figure 7.5 illustrates the number of coaches interviewed since the introduction of the mandatory code in the 2016/17 season for coaching positions requiring a UEFA B licence or above;

**Figure 7.5 Number of interviews conducted for academy coaching roles requiring a UEFA B licence or above during the 2016/17 season**
The table illustrates that 144 interviews were undertaken for coaching positions during the 2016/17 season. BAME coaches were awarded 39 interviews during the 2016/17 season (27%). This was a figure significantly lower than the 105 interviews awarded to White coaches (73%). BAME coaches were significantly outnumbered in the 72 interviews conducted for full-time positions, where the 14 interviews they were awarded represented 19% of all interview for full-time roles. There was more of a balance in the numbers of White and BAME coaches interviewed for part-time positions, however. White coaches were awarded 47 of the 72 interviews for these positions (65%), whilst BAME coaches were awarded 25 of the 72 for these positions (35%). In regard to the distribution of interviews, all 18 academies to receive applications from BAME coaches awarded an interview to a BAME coach (100%). A particularly significant figure to emerge from this data in respect to the core features of the mandatory code is that the 39 interviews awarded to BAME coaches came from just 40 applications, meaning 98% of applications from BAME coaches resulted in an interview. These figures suggest a very strong adherence from some academies to delivering on the mandatory code’s ‘interview guarantee’.

Many BAME coaches and key organisational stakeholders spoke of the ways in which the mandatory code’s ‘interview guarantee’ enabled BAME coaches to ‘neutralise’ racial bias and stereotypes which have traditionally denied opportunities for many BAME coaches to progress beyond the most preliminary stages of formalised recruitment processes (Bradbury et al, 2018; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986, 2005). For example, a BAME coach at a category two academy commented on the potential of the mandatory code to challenge such exclusionary practices;

“I think something as little as a name that’s foreign can get pushed aside. Whereas I think if they are progressing to an interview and you’re giving that individual an opportunity to sit down and get to know the coach and they can see how good they are, trying to overcome the obstacle of the name barrier, I think is a good thing” (BAME coach, category two academy)

Research into North American coaching contexts has noted the importance of ‘a
chance’ within recruitment processes (Singer et al., 2010). In men’s professional football in England, research has highlighted how formal interviews provide a platform on which ‘to increase the professional visibility of minority coaches within the previously narrow consciousness of key decision-makers at professional clubs’ (Bradbury et al., 2018, p. 332) The mandatory code’s ‘interview guarantee’ was believed to be of great benefit in this respect, as a number of BAME coaches valued the formal interview setting as a unique place which offered a degree of visibility and agency to BAME coaches in a process that they have historically been excluded from. A BAME coach at a category three academy felt that the guarantee of an interview represented an effective mechanism to include BAME coaches in interview processes;

“Because they now have to interview one BAME candidate, you are gonna get in front of somebody. That’s the hardest thing, getting in front of people.” (BAME coach, category three academy)

A number of interviewees felt that the mandatory code’s ‘interview guarantee’ provided BAME coaches with an opportunity to demonstrate their coaching abilities and experiences directly to academy decision makers. The work of Agyemang and Delorme has identified the positive impressions of Black candidates in interviews for head coaching positions in the NFL as increasing ‘the likelihood of Black candidates being strongly considered for future vacancies’ (2010, p.47). This was a perspective shared by a number of interviewees who felt formal interviews enabled a ‘window’ for BAME coaches to sell their strengths. A BAME coach at a category two academy reflected on the opportunities this provided;

“It gets you in front of the table, it gets you to get your point across to prove how good you are” (BAME coach, category 2 academy)

For many interviewees opportunities to undertake formal interviews were felt to offer valuable learning experiences for BAME coaches in aiding the development of presentational skills over time. A number of interviewees placed equal value upon both process and outcome regarding interviews; simply ‘getting to the table’ was valued intrinsically. This was felt to have particular resonance for BAME coaches who had little or no previous experience of professional interview
settings. Such assertions chimed strongly with research which has highlighted the cumulative effects of taking part in formal interview processes (Agyemang and Delorme, 2010). Taking part in multiple interview processes has been argued to provide opportunities to refine interview skills and support subsequent successful interviews (Agyemang and Delorme, 2010). To this end, the regulated opportunities for interviews embedded in the mandatory code were perceived to potentially engender positive medium- and long-term impacts in providing interactional encounters through which BAME coaches can better develop the relevant interview ‘tact’ to secure coach employment over time. One highly qualified BAME coach now working at a key stakeholder body commented:

“That formal interview thing is a massive thing and I’ve had plenty of interviews now. They’re all part of learning when you think about it, learning how to present yourself and align yourself with the clubs’ philosophy” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

7.4.4 Appointments

Research has identified the positive links between increased interview opportunities for traditionally marginalised groups and the securement of paid employment (Moon, 2009). Quantitative data suggested that the mandatory code’s interview guarantee had engendered opportunities to secure paid employment, as data indicated that there was a high number of interviews with BAME coaches which translated into the appointment of BAME coaches to positions. Figure 7.6 below presents data on the number of candidates appointed to academy coaching positions during the 2016/17 season.
The table illustrates that 47 coaches were appointed to academy coaching positions during the 2016/17 season. Despite BAME coaches being significantly outnumbered by their White counterparts in respect to applications submitted and interviews received, the number of BAME coaches appointed to academy coaching positions during this time was only one less than the number of White coaches appointed to academy positions. Despite this, there was an imbalance in the number of White and BAME coaches appointed to full and part-time positions. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of all coaches appointed to full-time positions were White, with 37% of full-time positions awarded to BAME coaches. The reverse was true for part-time positions, in that 57% of all part-time positions were awarded to BAME coaches, with 43% awarded to White coaches. Out of the 21 academies to appoint coaching staff during the 2016/17 season, 11 appointed BAME coaches (52%). Of these 11 clubs, 5 were clubs in the Midlands and London, and these clubs accounted for 52% of all BAME appointments (12).

For a number of interviewees, the relatively high levels of BAME coaches appointed during the 2016/17 season was reflective of a strong procedural adherence to the code amongst academies and its effectiveness in ensuring suitably qualified BAME coaches were awarded interviews. A formalised recruitment process has been argued by Singer et al to provide marginalised groups with opportunities to ‘actually compel hiring managers... to strongly
consider offering them the job’ (Singer et al, 2010, p.284). Many interviewees similarly felt that the formalisation of recruitment practices and the provision of a previously absent platform for BAME coaches to showcase their skills and abilities directly to key decision makers was a particularly significant factor in the numbers of BAME coaches appointed. This was exemplified in the reflections of a BAME coach recently appointed to a senior position at a category three status academy below;

“You could argue and go due to this rule I had the opportunity to sit down in front of the powers that be and from there I was able to make my case to go this is why you need to hire me. You could argue if that rule wasn’t there and they didn’t have to interview someone from a BAME background, would I be the new foundation phase lead? Probably not.” (BAME coach, category three academy)

A significant number of interviewees felt that the future numerical success of the code would be further enhanced if these initial positive quantitative and qualitative findings were widely publicised to aspiring BAME coaches. In this sense the code’s effectiveness was framed as catalytic; many interviewees believed news of the code’s initial procedural implementation had the potential to increase the number of applications from BAME coaches for coaching roles through both raising awareness of the code and increasing levels of confidence around the code. The prospective potential of the code to increase the future representation of BAME coaches in club academies was commented on by one BAME key organisational stakeholder;

“I think it would (increase appointments) by virtue of numbers, because more BAME people will go for these roles. The more that people see there’s a chance, the better it will be” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Taken together, quantitative data collected for each of these four stages of recruitment processes indicated a positive incremental ‘throughput’ of BAME coaches, particularly in comparison to their White counterparts. Figure 7.7 below provides data on the numbers of BAME and White coaches to progress through recruitment processes during the 2016/17 season, from the point of submission
of an application to appointment to an academy coaching position.

**Figure 7.7 Numbers of coaches to progress through academy coach recruitment stages during 2016/17 season**

![Bar chart showing numbers of White and BAME coaches progressing through recruitment stages]

As the table illustrates, there was a large imbalance in the number of White coaches (384) and BAME coaches (40) to apply for academy coaching positions during the 2016/17 season. However, as recruitment processes progressed to interview stages, this imbalance levelled out. Of the 384 applications submitted by White coaches for coaching positions, 105 resulted in an interview (27%). Whilst of the 40 applications submitted from BAME coaches, 39 resulted in an interview (98%). This data suggests that BAME coaches were *over three times more likely* to receive an interview than their White counterparts during the first year of the mandatory code’s implementation within academies.

At the interview stages of recruitment processes, although numerically BAME coaches represented just over a quarter (27%) of all candidates to be interviewed, they represented nearly half (49%) of all the candidates appointed to coaching positions during the 2016/17 season. This compared favourably to the equivalent statistics for White coaches, who represented 73% of all candidates to be interviewed, yet 51% of all candidates to be appointed to coaching positions. Further, 23% of White coaches to receive an interview were appointed, whilst 59% of BAME coaches to receive an interview were appointed. This data
suggests that BAME coaches were **over twice as likely** to secure paid employment after an interview than their White counterparts. Considering the split between full-time and part-time appointments however, over twice as many BAME coaches were appointed to part-time roles. This poses questions as to the extent to which the mandatory code, at this initial stage at least, has engendered a challenge to previously outlined patterns of occupational segregation (Cunningham, 2010). Nevertheless, whilst these figures are an isolated snapshot of a positive action measure in its relative infancy, these figures suggest that if they were to be maintained there will be a notable rise in comparison to figures drawn from the same survey data which indicated that BAME coaches represented 16.7% of the overall academy coaching workforce in men’s English professional football.

For a number of interviewees, the successful throughput of BAME coaches in academy recruitment processes was underpinned by a strong procedural adherence to the mandatory code. These interviewees felt that the relatively large upsurge in the representation of BAME coaches in some youth academies appeared to suggest that the mandatory code has started to dismantle the “**the business-as-usual forms of racism**” (Gillborn, 2008, p.22) which have traditionally remained out of the reach of equality policies that have historically characterised British sport (Burdsey, 2012, Hylton, 2009). This was in particular respect to the implementation of more formalised advertising procedures and interview selection processes at some academies. Where these more equitable practices of coach recruitment were in operation, this was felt to have widened the range of academies to incorporate a more ethnically diverse talent pool and to have enabled increased numbers of BAME coaches to progress through the previously blocked coach recruitment pipeline. A BAME coach at a category three academy reflected on these changing practices and their positive impacts:

“**It’s about being given the opportunity to showcase this is what I can do and in the past I think you weren’t even getting in through the door… that’s where underrepresentation comes from, cause a lot of people are going ‘he went for it and he’s got qualifications coming out of his nose, and if he can’t get a job why am I spending time effort and all this other stuff?’ So, for me now the massive thing that it will give is a platform, the clubs are seeing**
people that they wouldn’t have necessarily probably given a second thought to in the past” (BAME coach, category three academy)

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the first year of the implementation of the EFL’s mandatory code of coach recruitment in youth academies. Utilising quantitative and qualitative data, this chapter has done three things; outline the context of the code, examine its implementation, and analyse its effectiveness. Firstly, this chapter sought to outline the environment in which the code was introduced. This section found that youth academies possess a category status, which is premised upon the size of an academy, and its financial resources and coaching personnel. Secondly, this chapter sought to examine the practical implementation of the code, and in doing so argued that the code’s development, implementation and communication were underpinned by a relatively narrow range of voices in the consultation period. Not only did this create the impression in some academies that the code was merely an imposition, but this was also felt to restrict the numbers of BAME coaches who had an awareness and understanding of the mandatory code and its potential benefits. This section also argued that the code exists as a harder variant of liberal approaches to equality, which although stops short of guaranteeing equality of outcome nonetheless moves beyond the normative equality of opportunity narratives that have traditionally underpinned approaches to equality in British sport. Thirdly, this chapter sought to examine the effectiveness of the mandatory code. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the code indicates some successes in the code’s ability to at least partially address some of the more institutional barriers to employment experienced by aspirant BAME coaches. This has been most notable in the shift in a significant number of academies away from networks-based methods of recruitment towards formal four-step competencies-based methods which have provided a platform for BAME coaches to demonstrate their coaching skills and abilities, and simultaneously challenge racial bias and stereotyping.
8 Analysis of the voluntary code of coach recruitment

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the English Football League’s (EFL) voluntary code of coach recruitment within professional club first-teams. The focus of this chapter means it will also help to answer the second research question of this thesis. As with the previous chapter, this chapter will broadly comprise three areas relating to the voluntary code; context, implementation and effectiveness. The chapter’s key arguments will draw on data from semi-structured interviews with BAME coaches, club chief executives and key organisational stakeholders. Firstly, the chapter will contextualise the code. This will begin with a brief exploration of the professional club first-team coaching infrastructure, outlining typical coaching hierarchies and the positions involved. Secondly, this chapter will examine the practical implementation of the voluntary code. This will begin with an outlining of the detail of the code, before examining its development and implementation at the national level. This section will also analyse the code’s central features in relation to the equality models and approaches outlined in chapter four. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the effectiveness of the voluntary code. This section will analyse the procedural implementation of the voluntary code, and its efficacy in establishing formalised four-step recruitment processes which contain advertisements, applications, interviews and appointments.

8.2 Professional club first-team coaching environments

The EFL’s voluntary code of coach recruitment applies within all 72 professional football clubs in the EFL, comprising tiers two, three and four of the professional football pyramid. These leagues are known as the Championship (tier two), League One (tier three) and League Two (tier four). First-team coaching environments are largely comparable in terms of structure and personnel, with any differences stemming from the resources and financial capital available to EFL clubs. Like youth academy football, first-team coaching environments represent the hierarchical structure familiar to a number of team sports. These coaching staffs are led by a first-team manager, who ultimately controls
fundamental ‘on-pitch’ matters such as team selection and tactics. Managers are supported in this role by an assistant manager, an individual who is often appointed in tandem with a new first-team manager. Underneath this coaching duo many clubs, although not all, also employ a first-team head coach. This position usually oversees first-team training and preparation away from matchdays. Many clubs employ a number of coaching staff to support these roles, such as assistant first-team coaches, goalkeeping coaches and fitness coaches. The core positions of manager, assistant manager and first-team coach are all full-time positions, whilst the support coaching positions may often be on a part-time basis.

As opposed to the more developmental, holistic and relatively stable nature of youth academy coaching settings, first-team coaching environments have been conceptualised as competitive, pressured, and subject to high turnover rates. According to the LMA, first-team managerial and coaching roles are characterised by a ‘hire and fire approach’, which is argued to underpin shortening role tenures in the professional game (2018).

8.3 The EFL voluntary code of coach recruitment

The voluntary code initially started as a 10-club pilot at the beginning of the 2016/17 season. These 10 clubs came from all three divisions of the EFL; four from the Championship, four from League One and two from League Two. The first 18 months of the voluntary code produced mixed results, as there appeared to be little visible implementation of the code and no discernible outcomes (The Guardian, 2017; The Independent, 2017; SPTT, 2017). The voluntary code pilot was extended to all 72 Football League clubs on January 1st 2018 and was scheduled to run until the end of the 2018/19 season (EFL, 2018). As of June 2019, the voluntary code is now mandatory, however this present timescale is outside the scope of this study. The voluntary code contains two principles which professional clubs are expected to adhere to when appointing first team managerial and coaching staff (EFL, 2018). These principles are outlined below;

- During the season, clubs will be expected to interview one or more BAME candidate for any First Team managerial/coaching role (where an application has been received) in instances where they run a full recruitment process.
During the close season, clubs will be expected to run a full recruitment process for any First Team managerial/coaching role during which they must interview one or more BAME candidates (where an application has been received).

The voluntary code represents a form of positive action in its apparent acknowledgement of the unequal outcomes associated with one or more protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act (UK Government Equalities Office, 2010). This is evident in the code’s expectation for employers to treat ‘one group more favourably where this is a proportionate way to help members of that group overcome a disadvantage or participate more fully’ (UK Government Equalities Office, 2010). The code’s categorisation as a positive action measure is also demonstrated in its apparent acknowledgment that discrimination isn’t always visible or intentional (Fredman, 2011; Johns et al, 2014). The code’s existence as a positive action measure signifies a paradigmatic shift at the first team level of men’s professional football in England, particularly in regards to vocal resistance at the first-team level against such the introduction of such a measure in recent years (Lusted, 2017). In respect to Davies and Robison’s assertion that ‘there are relatively few employers who are prepared to embrace positive action initiatives’ (Davies and Robison, 2016, p. 11), the code’s explicit acknowledgement of the continuing salience of ‘race’ seemingly represents a novel approach which acknowledges the inequal outcomes of first-team coach recruitment practices for BAME coaches. As with the mandatory code, the voluntary code’s introduction implies a divergence from the ‘active suppression of ‘race’ as a legitimate topic’ outlined in characterizations of professional football as a racially neoliberal arena (Enck-Wanzer, 2011, p. 24 in Burdsey, 2011).

8.3.1 The national development and implementation of the voluntary code

Qualitative research indicated that there were similarities and differences in the development of the voluntary code in comparison to the mandatory code. Taking its inspiration from the Rooney Rule, the voluntary code was proposed and discussed at quarterly EFL meetings. These discussions took place between EFL representatives and club chairpersons and chief executives, which suggested
that the development of the voluntary code appeared to have been subject to a relatively democratic process in which those directly responsible for its delivery (club chief executives and chairpersons) discussed, voted on, and finally approved its content and introduction. This represented a point of divergence from the mandatory code’s development in that those delivering the mandatory code were *not* directly involved in its development. The inclusion of relevant stakeholders and organisational members in the development of equality policy is advocated in the literature (Bagilhole, 2006; Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Shaw, 2007). This is argued to offer relevant groups and individuals opportunities to provide input into the development of equality policy (Shaw, 2007); something felt to encourage the *openness* of decision-making processes regarding equality policy (Newman, 2002). This openness appeared to avoid the ways in which the mandatory code was seemingly ‘imposed’ upon academy managers (Bagilhole, 2006). All chief executives in this research reported a democratic process in the development of the voluntary code and so too its extension from a pilot of 10 clubs to all 72 EFL clubs. For example, a White club chief executive at a League One club commented on the active role he and others chief executives had had in the development of the voluntary code;

“It was discussed at the league meetings. We have 4 league meetings a year which the chief executives attend. It was discussed at that. The idea was kicked around and eventually got brought into place and I think we voted for it” (White club chief executive, League One club)

The ‘consultative process of policy formation’ (Newman, 2002, p.7) that this quote implies has been argued to increase the likelihood of equality policy being embraced by an organisation and its members (Bagilhole, 2006; Shaw, 2007). However, this seemingly more inclusive process in the development of the voluntary code appeared to actually contribute to the code’s dilution. This can be seen in the code’s details, which contain both a lack of clarity and non-committal language. For example, the phrases ‘clubs will be expected’ or ‘in instances where they run a full recruitment process’ represents a softness of language which is argued to illustrate an absence of conviction or belief that inequality truly exists (Williams and De Lima, 2006). On this score, research has highlighted how power imbalances between stakeholders in the development of approaches to
equality can limit an organisation's own attempts to effectively challenge racial inequity (Bradbury and Williams, 2006). In this instance, whilst the EFL’s senior hierarchy initiated the development of the voluntary code, the power of EFL clubs appeared to influence the wording of the policy so as to make it largely gestural. This dilution appeared to be underpinned by a mindfulness of public relations amongst some White club chief executives, as the chief executive of a Championship club indicated below;

“Stuff which is mandatory clubs tend to do cause there’s punitive measures against it. Then there’s the sort of PR element as well of, you know, if it came out that we didn’t follow the voluntary code, not sure it’d be a big story, they’ll be like oh well. But if you break a regulation, you know, as well as the punitive measures the EFL could pull on you, it looks quite bad then doesn’t it because you look a bit racist don’t you” (White club chief executive, Championship club)

8.3.2 The communication of the voluntary code

Interview data indicated that there were issues in the communication of the voluntary code to relevant groups. Meyerson and Kolb speak of the importance of including all relevant parties in the development and subsequent communication of equality policy (2000). Whilst the voluntary code incorporated some relevant voices into its development, it mirrored the mandatory code’s failure to consult or engage with BAME coaches throughout this process. Although all chief executives, club HR departments and key stakeholders had good knowledge of the code, many interviewees felt that BAME coaches were either unaware or had little grasp of what the code involved, or how it could be practically engaged with. For example, the following quote from a BAME coach indicated a piecemeal level of awareness of the voluntary code;

“I know there’s been talk about the Rooney rule, I don’t know if that’s actually been implemented or not” (BAME coach, category two academy)

In regards to equality policy, Shaw has argued that ‘opportunity only exists if those who might gain from it are also in a position to know about it, and act’ (Shaw, 2007, p. 428). Similarly, other interviewees questioned the levels of
engagement with the voluntary code amongst BAME coaches who remained unaware of the potential opportunities created by the code. This point was articulated by a BAME key organisational stakeholder who questioned whether the voluntary code truly included BAME coaches;

“9 out of 10 I think would say it is a good thing that the EFL are doing this and hope it makes positive change. But I think only 1 out of 10 would be able to tell you about how they practically have taken advantage of that or feel that they have been part of this process” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Not only were these quotes representative of a piecemeal knowledge of the voluntary code amongst BAME coaches, they also alluded to a lack of active participation in the code’s development. The work of Connell suggests these patterns are not unusual; noting that equality policies are often developed and framed by dominant groups who wield institutional power (2006). As with the mandatory code, the development of the voluntary code and its exclusion of BAME coaches in this process seemingly reflected the lack of BAME groups in leadership positions more broadly in men’s professional football in England.

Cognisant of these patterns of development, implementation and communication, this chapter now turns to an examination of the procedural implementation of the voluntary code, and its effectiveness in challenging some of the normative recruitment practices outlined in chapter 6.

8.4 The procedural implementation of the voluntary code in professional clubs

This section will draw upon semi-structured interviews from BAME coaches, club chief executives and key organisational stakeholders (N=29). This data will be used to examine the adherence to and effectiveness of the voluntary code from a procedural standpoint during the 2017/18 season. Whilst the principles of the voluntary code do not articulate what a full recruitment process is, this chapter presents data in the same structure as the previous chapter. As such, this next section will examine the procedural implementation of the voluntary code in regard to advertisements, applications, interviews and appointments.
8.4.1 Advertisements

The significance of the public advertisement of coaching roles was indicated in the relative successes of the mandatory code in ensuring that advertisements for vacant professional club youth academy roles were both formalised and widely publicised. The advertisement of roles is also deemed to be significant at the first-team level as a means to move away from the traditional reliance of clubs upon informal mechanisms of recruitment (LMA, 2018). Interviewees felt that the introduction of the voluntary code into professional clubs had engendered very little change in this sense, as the formal and public advertisement of roles was deemed to remain absent from the recruitment processes operated by clubs at the first-team level. For example, a BAME former manager now employed as a key organisational stakeholder commented on the continuing absence of formal advertisements at the first-team level;

“At the first team it’s never advertised, it’s not like any other job where you say right we’re looking for a manager, here’s what we have to do to” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

The absence of formal advertisements was attributed to a number of reasons. Club chief executives felt that the formal advertisement of positions expected by the voluntary code was unnecessary due to their belief that the highly public nature of first-team managerial appointments meant all potential candidates knew about coaching vacancies anyway. For example, a White club chief executive at a League One club reflected on the redundancy of formal advertising in the public arena of first-team football;

“You tend not to need to advertise in all honesty because everybody’s aware of it anyway” (White club chief executive, League One club)

This was also felt to be the case amongst a number of interviewees who felt the absence of formal advertising would not undermine the potential pool of applicants for first-team managerial and coaching positions. This was an opinion outlined by the following White club chief executive at a League Two club;

“In terms of the voluntary code I still think, because it’s so public even
though you’re not advertising, you still get all the applications come in”
(White club chief executive, League Two club)

Although the absence of advertising of coaching roles has been argued to embody a form of access discrimination by denying opportunities for marginalised groups to enter employment (Cunningham and Sagas, 2005), these quotes indicated the belief amongst White club chief executives that the publicity surrounding professional club first-teams overrode any potential form of access discrimination. However, previous research has contended that such perspectives overplay the openness and reach of these informal methods of advertisements amongst complex patterns of discrimination in recruitment practices (Jewson and Mason, 1986, p.53). A number of interviewees felt that despite the stated transparency of these ‘non-advertisements’, BAME coaches still did not know where to find or apply for first-team managerial and coaching roles. For example, a BAME coach reflected on how he felt colleagues remained unaware of how to apply for these roles at the first-team level;

“Now I ask a load of BAME coaches and they go ‘I don’t even know where to search for these roles’ because unanimously these roles are not freely advertised so it becomes well I’ve got all these qualifications but I don’t know where I need to go” (BAME coach, category one academy)

This absence of formal adverts suggested a passivity amongst professional clubs, whereby they would wait for applications to be submitted once a vacancy arose. However, a number of interviewees felt this oversimplified the realities of these initial stages of first-team recruitment processes. It was felt that that the absence of adverts was undercut by the continuation of less transparent recruitment practices. Indeed, some club chief executives reported practices of headhunting which drew from their own social and cultural networks, which appeared to afford privileges and opportunities to coaches who operate in these same social and cultural spaces (Fletcher et al, 2014; Piggott, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005). For example, although clubs reported receiving some applications, it appeared that the applications of some coaches worked in tandem with information chief executives could gather on applicants from their personal and professional connections. This was outlined by a White club chief executive
at a League One club;

“So there’s two sides to it really. The initial period is just seeing the interest that comes in. Then we’ll maybe do our own sort of calls in the background as well, there’s a lot of gathering information. It’s quite a small world football. We’ll speak to other people who may be able to give us a bit more information about certain characters” (White club chief executive, League One club)

A number of other interviewees felt that the continuation of these informal practices served to maintain the exclusion of BAME coaches from participating in recruitment processes, and in doing so miss several potential opportunities that the voluntary could create. For example, the advertisement of positions is argued to be a significant mechanism in increasing the inclusivity of recruitment processes (Borland and Bruening, 2010; Chelladurai, 2006). This was a point articulated by a number of interviewees who felt that the formal advertisement of positions provided opportunities for BAME coaches to participate in first-team recruitment processes that they have historically been denied entry into. Advertisements were deemed to be significant in dismantling the privileges created through pre-existing relationships with club senior decision-makers. For example, a BAME coach at a category two academy commented;

“It eliminates that sense of who you know, it eliminates that if you know someone, you’re likely to give them the job. It gives people a chance” (BAME coach, category two academy)

Another significant factor to emerge in these discussions were the length of time professional clubs allowed for applicants to apply. Interviewees felt that the voluntary code failed to engender ‘reasonable time frames’ in the advertisement of positions as encouraged by the mandatory code (Singer et al, 2010). Research undertaken by the LMA has highlighted the short-termism and speed present in the recruitment of first-team coaching staff, and the exclusionary implications of this for the opportunities available for some BAME coaches (2018). In this research, some clubs were felt to act extremely quickly on the occasions where they did compile a shortlist of candidates. This was attributed by club chief executives to a number of external reasons. For example, the time pressures of
a regular football season were argued to make reasonable time frames in which to advertise roles counterproductive to the recruitment of staff. This was exemplified by a White club chief executive at a League Two club, who reflected on the haste with which clubs conducted recruitment processes;

“Time is always of the essence. Whether it’s through the close season or through the season, you’re always in a bit of rush to appoint somebody.”

(White club chief executive, League Two club)

Similarly, other interviewees felt that pressure from fans meant that clubs were reticent to advertise roles for a suitable period. This was illustrated in the comments of the White club chief executive of a League Two club below;

“We got absolutely battered the last time because it took us something like 13 or 14 days to get a manager. The fans were singing against the chairman saying we want a manager and all that kind of stuff. It was only 2 weeks, but it seemed like an age at the time” (White club chief executive, League Two club)

These external pressures were felt to make the advertisement of positions irrelevant despite the voluntary code’s expectations. Many senior club staff maintained that these methods were inherently fair and would provide no greater or lesser opportunity for BAME or White coaches. However, it has been argued that a ‘flawed time frame prevents the decision-makers from really being able to seek out, identify, and interview a diverse pool of head coaching candidates that includes racial minorities’ (Singer et al, 2010, p. 285). These short time frames were thus felt to constrict the pool of potential applicants to managerial and coaching positions. This was deemed to maintain the privileges of those with personal and professional relationships to club power brokers (or connected intermediaries) and ensure their increased likelihood to be provided with employment opportunities (Cunningham, 2010; Cunningham and Sagas, 2005).

8.4.2 Applications

A number of these above issues appeared to impact upon the numbers of applications from BAME coaches for positions at the first-team level. Labour market research has noted the symbiotic link between the formal advertisement
of job roles and the numbers of applications for them (Chelladurai, 2006; Kim and Gelfand, 2003). Indeed, interview data indicated that the voluntary code’s introduction into professional clubs had produced no discernible rise in the number of BAME coaches applying for managerial and coaching roles at the first-team level. For some interviewees this was felt to be due to the absence of a formalised portal in which competitive applications could be submitted for roles. Such a platform was felt to represent an important mechanism through which to identify potential candidates for subsequent interview stages of a recruitment process. A former BAME coach now working with a key organisational stakeholder reflected on this;

“They have to have something in place which allows for CVs or job applications to be submitted and for them to take what they feel is the best candidates for an interview” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

For a number of interviewees, the voluntary code did not embody the mechanism the above interviewee refers to. This appeared to create (or maintain) a sense of disillusionment amongst BAME coaches with the first-team recruitment strategies of professional clubs. For example, many (predominantly older) BAME coaches reported that the voluntary code largely represented an ‘empty’ policy. Such perspectives concurred with the work of Ahmed who has noted the gestural engagements of sports organisations with equality policies when there is an absence of mandatory principles (2007). A number of interviewees emphasised the voluntary nature of the code in this respect and felt it embodied a tokenistic commitment that lacked a framework necessary to make it a practical, meaningful and convincing recruitment mechanism that would increase the numbers of BAME applicants. For example, a BAME key organisational stakeholder reflected;

“With anything voluntary, if you want to make change you’ve got to say this is what you’re going to have to do. I think a voluntary code in this instance is a waste of time, I really do.” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Similarly, other interviewees felt that the non-performativity of the voluntary code meant that the policy had done little to change pre-existing feelings of scepticism amongst BAME coaches towards first team coach recruitment practices at clubs
(Ahmed, 2007). A BAME coach working in a category two academy reflected on this below;

“If people genuinely feel that there’s a point in doing something, they’ll do it. I think when you generally speak to people of similar backgrounds to myself there’s still a feeling of, well I’m not sure how fair it is.” (BAME coach, category two academy)

Whilst the opportunity to submit a formal CV and application was felt by a number of interviewees to create opportunities for BAME coaches to sell their abilities directly to senior club decision makers. A number of other interviewees felt that the submittal of an application did not automatically dismantle the privileges of pre-existing relationships with senior club decision-makers and subsequent patterns of homologous reproduction (Sartore and Cunningham, 2005). The work of Borland and Bruening has examined how greater levels of social capital held by White groups within sport can result in ‘backstage’ decisions which, despite appearing on the surface as fair, can override the applications of highly qualified minority candidates (2010). This was perceived to be the case by some interviewees who felt the increased reputational capital of some White managers and coaches placed them at an advantage at this stage of recruitment processes. The corollary of these processes was felt to be continuing inopportunity for some BAME coaches who lacked requisite levels of social capital. For example, a BAME coach at a category one academy reflected;

“So, if there’s an opportunity to go for a job and that BAME coach has got those qualifications he should be shortlisted along with anybody else. But what might happen is the BAME coach has got the qualifications but because a White coach might have a name, might not have the same qualifications as him, he gets shortlisted, he gets interviewed, he gets the job.” (BAME coach, category one academy)

8.4.3 Interviews

Qualitative data suggested that since the voluntary code’s introduction, efforts to ensure that at least one suitably qualified BAME coach was shortlisted for an interview (in instances when clubs run a full recruitment process) were often piecemeal, and largely contingent on the preferred recruitment practices of senior
club power brokers. Such outcomes have been noted with equality policies which lack organisational commitment amongst policy-implementers, particularly in instances where policy-implementers see little value in a policy’s key principles (Bagilhole, 2006; Shaw, 2007). Interview data revealed that there was a widespread deprioritisation of candidate shortlists and even interviews themselves at this stage of first team recruitment processes amongst clubs. Where interviews did take place, these were often felt to be isolated incidents which were a result of casual practices such as headhunting. Resultantly, this was felt to deny a number of BAME coaches interview opportunities. For example, a BAME key organisational stakeholder reported how the voluntary code had not led to an increase in formal interview opportunities;

“If you were to speak to a former player for example about this, I don’t find many that have said yes I’ve had this positive response, I’ve had this interview” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

For a number of White club chief executives, the voluntary code’s expectation of formalised interview processes was framed as an obstruction in their ability to operate their preferred, ‘fair’ recruitment practices. This was reflective of their beliefs in the existence and importance of meritocracy and equal opportunity in their coach recruitment practices. In this sense, these beliefs amongst senior staff reflected the strategies and values espoused by decision makers and administrators within sports organisations more broadly (Hylton, 2015; Long et al, 2005; Shaw, 2007; Singer et al, 2005). The voluntary code’s principles of diversity and inclusivity were frequently maligned in favour of practices such as headhunting. For example, a White club chief executive at a League One club spoke of his club’s preference of networks-based approaches;

“Some people go through an interview process, some don’t. We’ve been fortunate in that the last two appointments we’ve certainly managed to get our target” (White club chief executive, League One club)

Similarly, other interviewees reported that interview shortlists were regularly absent out of a preference for informal and targeted forms of recruitment. As has been argued in the literature, a number of interviewees felt that these methods placed restrictions on the size and diversity of potential candidate pools for a
given position (Singer et al, 2010). These perceptions were demonstrated by a White club chief executive at a League One club who reflected on the process they conducted in appointing their current (White) manager;

“In the first team we only interviewed one person for the job. We didn’t go through an interview process because there was only one person and we managed to get him in quite quickly” (White club chief executive, League One club)

Despite appearing fair to many senior club power brokers, these informal practices are argued to miss crucial opportunities to dismantle a number of practices of racial closure outlined in chapter 6 at the first-team level. For example, the previous chapter illustrated how the inclusion of BAME coaches in interview processes can potentially neutralise racial bias and stereotypes that are embedded in networks-based methods of recruitment (Bradbury et al, 2018; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). A number of interviewees felt that the prioritisation of informal methods such as headhunting at the first-team level sidestepped these vital interactional opportunities. In doing so, it was felt that senior first-team staff consciously or unconsciously gravitated towards White coaches who were not subject to the same forms of racial biases and stereotypes identified in chapter 6. These patterns were perceived by a BAME coach at a category three academy who reflected on the inopportunity these continuing informal practices sustained for BAME coaches;

“It means they’re (senior academy staff) not giving opportunities to the potential right candidate because they have these stereotypical views that a Black and ethnic minority individual hasn’t got the skillsets to manage a group of people” (BAME coach, category three academy)

Some clubs in this research did report undertaking a formal interview process which involved multiple candidates, including BAME candidates. However, these clubs reported doing so despite rather than because of the voluntary code. The interviewing of BAME candidates without explicitly adhering to the voluntary code was consequently used as a basis to justify that the voluntary code’s ‘interview expectation’ was redundant, as the occasional diversity of interview shortlists was styled as evidence that discrimination was absent from these club settings. In this
sense, the code’s deprioritisation amongst these interviewees was reflective of the ways in which power brokers in elite sport have utilised discourses of diversity ‘to block any action that would implement equality and diversity initiatives by justifying that there is no need for such commitments’ (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016, p. 362). This was exemplified by some club chief executives who felt that the inherently ‘fair’ recruitment processes of their club meant that interviewing suitably qualified BAME candidates was a ‘natural occurrence’ which happened independent of the voluntary code. For example, a White club chief executive at a League Two club spoke to this perspective below;

“I would like to think all clubs will always try and appoint the best person for the job regardless (of the voluntary code). I think that last example shows that certainly in our case. There were two candidates we wanted, and they were both BAME candidates. We didn’t interview them because they were BAME candidates, we interviewed the two of them because we thought they were strong people for the role here.” (White club chief executive, League Two club)

For those BAME coaches who felt that the voluntary code’s principles did have the potential to create increased interview opportunities for BAME coaches, there remained questions around the veracity of these opportunities. Singer et al have questioned the seriousness of some elite teams in hiring coaches of colour in college sport in the USA (2010). This work has suggested that some teams may grant “token interviews” to appease the critics of the current hiring practices in college sport’ (2010, p. 284). Similarly, some BAME coaches felt that clubs could offer interviews under the voluntary code to fulfil a diversity agenda and exploit the reputational opportunities they felt the voluntary code presented to club hierarchies. This was reflected upon by a BAME coach currently working at a championship club who recalled his previous experiences in the game;

“I am the classic person that someone could have on an interview list and go around the country just being interviewed; ‘oh he’s got all the qualifications but we’re just gonna interview him cause at least it ticks a box’… You could be a professional interviewee” (BAME coach, championship club)
8.4.4 Appointments

Secondary quantitative data indicates that during the first season of the implementation of the voluntary code there was a small increase in the representation of BAME managers at EFL clubs. For example, figures at the start of the 2017/18 season indicated that there were 2 BAME managers employed at EFL clubs (3%) (LMA, 2018). Whilst figures indicated that at the end of the 2017/18 season there were 4 BAME managers employed at EFL clubs (6%) (LMA, 2018). This suggested that the number of BAME managers had doubled during the 2017/18 season (secondary data on first-team BAME coaches for this period is unavailable). This may indicate that some clubs are properly implementing the voluntary code, however, based on the evidence presented in this chapter, it may be more likely the case that these statistical increases in the number of BAME managers and coaches at the first-team level during the 2017/18 season are within the range of the ordinary incremental fluctuations in the representation of BAME coaches presented in chapter 6.

For many interviewees, the inability of the voluntary code to engender any representational gains beyond normative patterns was at least partially due to the lack of formal obligations embedded in the code. In this sense the code was felt to effectively exist as a guideline, which clubs could follow or ignore as they so wished. Based on their previous experiences and interactions with recruitment processes at the first-team level, a number of interviewees perceived only the most gestural approaches to the procedural implementation of the voluntary code amongst professional clubs. For example, a BAME key organisational stakeholder reflected;

“Essentially the voluntary code is a club will give it a go, if they’re not under any pressure to do so. I mean it’s so weak that it’s not really been given a chance to succeed” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

The absence of pressure on sports organisations to demonstrate a proactive approach to the development and implementation of equality policy has been exemplified within the UK Sport Equality Standard, where a number of sports bodies have failed to progress beyond the charter’s preliminary (and mandatory) tiers (Shaw, 2007). Several interviewees felt that similar processes were reflected
in the implementation of the voluntary code. The code’s voluntary nature was felt to grant a high level of autonomy to clubs in deciding whether to implement it properly. A BAME key organisational stakeholder reflected on the likely impacts of these features on the code’s ability to effect a notable change on the levels of BAME coaches at the first-team level;

“If you want to make change you’ve got to say this is what you’re going have to do, you can’t say you have to leave it to clubs.” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Previous research into resistance against diversity policies has indicated a tension between the competitive goals of sports club and the provision of opportunities to minority groups (Spaiij et al., 2019). Clubs have also been found to justify a lack of engagement with diversity and equality policies in suggesting it would compromise chances of success (Jeanes et al, 2019). A number of interviewees felt that that senior first-team staff were unlikely to meaningfully implement the voluntary code for similar reasons. This was exemplified in the comments of some interviewees who reported that the code often came ‘second best’ to the preferred ‘success-driven’ recruitment practices of professional clubs. A key organisational stakeholder reflected on this below;

“Clubs won’t buy into the Rooney rule, for them the rule is not an issue. There are owners who have their own ideas and reasons on who they’re going to bring in and I don’t think they’re going to be dissuaded by being asked to look at this process” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Some senior first-team staff did indeed report how the code was ‘not an issue’. However, this was not because of a dismissal of equality but rather due to a belief that equality was already present. These interviewees felt that a level playing field already existed in their approaches to recruitment, and sport more broadly. This was attributed to equality of opportunity policies in the game which these interviewees believed ensured the equal treatment of all groups. Indeed, some senior staff referred to equal opportunity statements on their club websites as evidence of this. In this sense, these staff appropriated the language of diversity without altering their practices (Ahmed, 2007; Spaaij et al., 2019). This allowed some senior staff to appear sympathetic to issues of equality and diversity whilst
simultaneously resisting against the voluntary code. This was indicated by staff a
White chief executive of a League One club when reflecting on the
implementation and impact of the voluntary code in his club;

“We treat everybody equal and I think there’s quite strict controls on that
to make sure that you are” (White club chief executive, League One club)

The absence of a meaningful procedural implementation of the voluntary code
within first-team coaching workplaces was felt to be particularly disappointing in
regard to the successes of the mandatory code, and the increased mass of BAME
coaches at the youth academy level the code appeared to produce. The minimal
statistical gains created by the voluntary was felt to be symptomatic of a failure
to create a coaching pipeline which presented a clear, structured route for BAME
coaches at the youth academy level to enter positions of paid employment at the
first-team level. A BAME key organisational stakeholder reflected on what he felt
were missed opportunities in this respect;

“It would be a great code if that pathway from academy through to senior
level was linear and actually everyone goes through this step process
where you start at under 16’s, you go to under 18’s, you go to under 21’s,
you go to the senior level then brilliant. That’s the critical mass of coaches
then filling that pathway. But we all know that doesn’t happen, that does
not happen” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Resultantly, the poor procedural implementation of the voluntary code was felt by
some interviewees to further disenfranchise prospective BAME managers and
coaches. The voluntary code’s implementation and impacts indicate little
organisational and procedural change for the immediate benefit of BAME groups
currently in coach employment. However, the perceived lack of rigour or
seriousness shown towards its development by the EFL and its implementation
by senior decision-makers was felt by a number of interviews to have
consequences for the long-term prospects of increasing the representation of
BAME groups at the first-team level. This was felt likely to leave the small core of
relatively high-profile BAME managers currently established in the game as the
sole BAME representatives at the first-team level for the foreseeable future (LMA,
2018). A BAME key organisational stakeholder reflected on the likely continuation
of this current state of affairs:

“I think for this to work it needs at least to be properly embedded within rules and regulation. We’ve got no pipeline, there’s no real enthusiasm, you’ll always have (small established group of BAME coaches), but there’s others who’ll go, ‘why am I going into a place where I don’t really feel invited, I don’t really feel accepted, I don’t feel I’ve got an equal shot?’” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the procedural implementation of the voluntary code of coach recruitment within professional club first-teams. This chapter was broadly structured into three sections relating to the context, implementation and effectiveness of the voluntary code. Firstly, this chapter contextualised the code. In doing so, this chapter found that first-team coaching infrastructures generally comprise a hierarchical structure, headed by a first-team manager, assistant manager, and head coach, and supported by a number of support coaching staff. This section also noted that first-team coaching positions are usually high-pressured, competitive and often unstable. Secondly, this chapter sought to examine the practical implementation of the voluntary code. This section found that whilst the code appeared on the surface to be a harder variant of a liberal approach to equality, its ‘strength’ was undermined by loose wording and a domineering organisational input from professional clubs which restricted it’s ability to forcefully stimulate conditions to shift recruitment processes from equality of opportunity towards equality of outcome. Finally, this chapter sought to examine the effectiveness of the voluntary code. Qualitative analysis of the code indicated little headway in addressing previously outlined racialised barriers experience by BAME groups attempting to secure paid employment. A generally poor adherence to the codes was demonstrated in the reporting of all clubs on their continuation of informal coach recruitment methods which failed to formally advertise managerial and coaching vacancies or formally interview at least one suitably qualified BAME applicant. Recruitment practices continued to be unregulated, with little progress appearing to be made in ‘opening up’ recruitment practices for groups beyond those already in the dominant social and cultural networks of the football industry.
9 Attitudinal implementation of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the attitudes of senior decision makers in youth academies and professional club first-teams towards the EFLs mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment. Consequently, this chapter seeks to answer the third research question of this thesis. Drawing on interview data, the chapter will seek to present two ideologies which were broadly adopted by decision-makers in respect to the code’s implementation. Firstly, this chapter will examine the presence of colour conscious approaches to coach recruitment. This will explore the ways in which senior decision makers recognised the salience of ‘race’ in coach recruitment. Data will be drawn upon to present three themes within this ideology; recognising the existence of racialised barriers in coach recruitment; valuing cultural diversity in the coaching workplace; and, as a consequence of these factors, supporting the organisational buy-in of the codes of coach recruitment. Secondly, the chapter will examine the presence of colour-blind approaches to coach recruitment. This will explore the ways in which senior decision makers denied the salience of ‘race’ in coach recruitment. Three themes will be presented here; denying the existence of racialised barriers in coach recruitment; liberalist ideologies in the coaching workplace, and as a consequence of these factors, a lack of organisational buy-in to the codes of coach recruitment. This chapter will draw upon theoretical concepts and literature outlined throughout the thesis to inform and structure central arguments around the presence and outcomes of colour-blind and colour-conscious approaches of senior staff.

9.2 Colour-conscious approaches to coach recruitment

In the implementation of equality policy, a key consideration is the linkages between procedure and organisational culture (Long et al, 2005). Procedures are argued to be only as effective as the attitudinal perspectives which underpin them (Long et al, 2005). In this section, arguments are presented that it was in coaching
settings where senior staff adopted a distinctly colour conscious approach to coach and player operations, where there was a much stronger level of organisational buy-in to the principles of inclusivity embodied within the codes of recruitment. Interview data indicated that colour-conscious perspectives emerged exclusively from senior staff in youth club academies, the reasons for which will be examined within this section. A colour conscious perspective is argued to recognise racial difference, with the intention of remedying racial inequity (Bonnet, 2014; Haney-Lopez; 2000; Hylton, 2005). In acknowledging the historical and structural inequity experienced by marginalised groups, colour conscious perspectives are argued to acknowledge that ‘inequity, inopportunity, and oppression are historical artefacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society’ (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p.29). Drawing upon interviews undertaken with senior staff, this section now turns to examine the ways in which colour-conscious perspectives underpinned an apparently meaningful engagement with the codes of recruitment.

9.2.1 Recognition of the existence of racialised barriers in coach recruitment

The starting point for colour conscious approaches to begin to remedy racial inequity is the recognition that there exist racially unequal experiences and opportunities between different groups in society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Chapter 6 identified several racialised barriers requiring negotiation by BAME coaches. These barriers were argued to be largely invisible in that they were embedded in the everyday, taken for granted recruitment practices of professional club first-team and youth academies. However, interview data indicated that amongst a number of academy managers, there was a significant level of ‘problem awareness’ exhibited. Amongst these interviewees, there was a recognition that despite the dominant equality of opportunity discourse in the game, BAME coaches faced unique barriers in accessing coach employment as a result of their ethnicity. This was especially the case (but, not exclusively) amongst senior staff at academies situated in ethnically diverse locales, with larger numbers of young players from BAME backgrounds, and which had a relatively higher representation of BAME coaches amongst their staff. For example, a White academy manager at a category two academy reflected on the ways in which he felt the normal operation of coach education courses have historically denied the
full participation of marginalised groups;

“I liken the underrepresentation (of BAME coaches) to when we were in the county FA when we used to have an issue with a lack of female coaches and we used to have to approach it in a different way because for many, many reasons if we put on a standard course at the standard times the course would be full with men and boys. So we had to do something different around the course whether that was the location, the timings, who tutored the course, how you marketed the course, how you supported the candidates pre, post or during the course to attract more females onto it. Now it’s a similar thing with coaches from a BAME background” (White academy manager, category two academy)

For Bonilla-Silva, individuals who embody a colour-conscious perspective to making sense of racial inequity may be classified as ‘racial progressives’ (2003, p.132). These are individuals that are argued to not only recognise the significance of discrimination, but also to support the introduction of harder variants of liberal equality measures such as positive action to begin to dismantle discriminatory processes (2003). In recognition of the racialised barriers faced by some BAME coaches, a number of academy staff were supportive of the development and implementation of new interventionist approaches such as the mandatory code of coach recruitment. As has been advocated in the literature, a number of these interviewees subscribed to the belief that systemic inequalities experienced by BAME coaches would continue if unequal access to opportunities was left to chance or market forces (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Johns et al, 2014; Greene and Kirton, 2010). The mandatory code’s proactive and novel approach in this regard was felt by these interviewees to have the potential to ‘open-up’ the coach recruitment process of and to increase the numbers of BAME coaches in academy coaching workforces. A White academy manager at a category two academy summarised these perspectives below:

‘With coaches from a BAME background, I just think it does need a bespoke option or bespoke solution because if we keep doing what we’re currently doing then the numbers aren’t going to improve because we’ve been trying to do that already’ (White academy manager, category two
9.2.2 Valuing cultural diversity in the coaching workplace

Interview data suggested senior staff who displayed a colour-conscious perspective valued the mandatory code’s potential in increasing the levels of cultural diversity in the coaching workplace. These staff placed a high importance on cultural diversity, and felt it was an important asset in meeting developmental organisational goals. The significance of cultural diversity to sports organisations can be seen in the number of equality policies which explicitly outline cultural diversity as core strategic objectives (FA, 2018; Sports Coach UK, 2012; UK Sport, 2017). The significance of cultural diversity to youth academies was reflected in the perceptions of a number of senior staff in this research who outlined a range of interpersonal, pedagogical and performative benefits provided by cultural diversity. For example, some interviewees felt that the culturally homogenous workforces of a number of youth academies and first teams resulted in a narrower set of coaching experiences, abilities and knowledge, and missed potential opportunities provided by culturally diverse organisations to stimulate creativity and innovation, and generate more and better ideas (Cunningham, 2009; Fink and Pastore, 1999; Powell, 1993; Robbins, 1994). This was reflected amongst senior staff who felt that the corollary of increasing the representation of BAME coaches would be increased cultural diversity, and improved operational effectiveness of coaching workforces. This was commented on by a BAME senior coach in a category two academy below;

“Do we all look the same? Are your skills different to mine? Sometimes I’ll have somebody who’s so far removed from the company I’m in, just so I can get their point of view because they might have a point of view that we haven’t really even thought about. It’s common sense. I think that people just need to start seeing sense and seeing value in having a diverse group of people in your club” (BAME coach, category two academy)

These colour-conscious perspectives almost exclusively emerged in youth academies rather than first teams. In these settings, diversity and difference were far more likely to be recognised. This suggested that there were aspects of these coaching workplaces which were distinct from first-team settings. Indeed, when
examining the presence of racially progressive attitudes, Bonilla-Silva asks ‘*what segment of the dominant ‘race’ does not subscribe to the dominant racial ideology and why not?*’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 132). Interview data indicated that the strong fit between some academy coaching workplaces and colour-conscious perspectives appeared to be encouraged by the holistic and developmental oriented nature of a number of youth academies. For a number of interviewees, youth academy coaches were widely felt to be places where coaching responsibilities co-existed with mentoring, liaison and educational roles, which included relationships with coaches, players and parents alike. This was exemplified in interview data which expressed the significance of ‘commonality’ between players and coaches within youth academies. Although this commonality was not *reduced* to the cultural identity of players and coaches, such similarities were nonetheless felt to be beneficial within these youth academies. Discourses of ethnic and cultural diversity were especially strong when referencing young BAME players, for whom role models within academies were deemed to be of particular significance. The presence of visible role models has been argued to provide potentially positive impacts on the developmental experiences of young athletes, and also their future coaching aspirations (Singer and Cunningham, 2018). These notions emerged amongst a number of academy managers, who felt that increased levels of BAME coaches could improve the relationships between BAME players and coaching staffs in youth academies. For example, a White academy manager at a category two academy indicated this in his reflections of the relationships between players and coaches in his academy;

“We do believe in role models for the boys and particularly in our club, some of our Black players have a different relationship with some of our Black coaches than with our other coaches. I think there’s definitely a pattern” (White academy manager, category two academy)

Similar themes emerged from interviewees who felt that the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in youth academies identified in chapter 6 meant that some BAME players were marginalised in academies. The presence of academy coaches who shared cultural backgrounds and norms to these players was felt to be particularly important in youth academies with traditionally homogeneous
coaching workforces. Within homogenous coaching workplaces that may be less progressive and inclusive, antisocial or culturally insensitive behaviour directed toward BAME groups is likely to go unchecked (Fink et al., 2001). To challenge such outcomes, research has identified the positive relational impacts of having members of coaching staff with similar cultural backgrounds to young athletes (Cunningham, 2008; Singer and Cunningham, 2018). In this research, a number of interviewees felt that the increased representation of BAME coaches supported the creation of youth academy workplaces which possessed a greater range of cultural awareness. These increased levels of cultural awareness within coaching workforces were felt to provide a more inclusive experience for BAME players in particular. For example, a BAME former coach now working with a key stakeholder organisation provided an illustrative example below into the significance of these cultural understandings at an interactional level;

“It’s all very well to talk about having equality education but there’s nothing better than being on the spot having somebody beside you and correcting you at the time. A White coach said to me one day he was not having a go but trying to say look… and the Black lad had got his eyes down. Now in our culture you can’t eyeball your elders, and so he’s going look at me, look at me, but the lad apparently found it really difficult to because he’s being having a word with, but the coach didn’t understand why he thought the lad was being disrespectful.” (BAME key organisational stakeholder)

Similarly, a number of interviewees at the youth academy level felt that some youth academies with predominantly White coaching workforces lacked the ‘cultural options’ and related developmental capacities to provide sufficient duties of care to BAME players. In these instances, culturally homogenous coaching workforces were felt to underpin poor relationships between coaches and BAME players. A BAME senior youth development phase coach at a category three academy provided his own reflections on these tensions that he felt arose within these youth academies;

“I think it’s important we have coaching staff that understand the demographic of the group we are working with. Sometimes it’s quite painful
as a Black coach to watch how they’re (predominantly White coaching staff) dealing with some of the Black players. I think it’s important that clubs recognise that they need to make sure they understand the players they’re working with.” (BAME coach, category three academy)

BAME coaches in these instances were conceptualised in terms of their technical and experiential abilities, and as possessing an important added value component as a positive pedagogical and intercultural resource. This culturally conscious approach to human resource management was felt by some interviewees to have enabled some academies to better ‘connect with’ and support the social and psychological development of young BAME players especially. These youth academy staff positioned the cultural identity of staff as a ‘plus’ factor within recruitment in respect to the benefits diversity was believed to provide to their predominantly White institutions (Moses and Chang, 2006; Pike et al, 2007; Yosso and Solórzano, 2005). In this sense, this culturally reflexive approach exhibited by these senior staff to the recruitment of coaches appeared to include the cultural identity of BAME coaches in their conceptualisation of merit. Rather than as features to be ignored, these senior staff identified the ‘genuine relevance of identity for professional practice, beyond the limited scope of formal occupational qualifications’ (Johns et al, 2014, p. 109). For example, a White assistant academy manager at a category two academy attached positive value to the cultural identities of BAME coaches as he reflected on the racial dynamics in player-coach relationships;

“It’s fantastic if we can get a real mix because for example a Black coach from inner-city (City where academy is based) may have had some different experiences that he can share with us as staff that can help us get better and better understand the kind of black inner-city areas of (City). It broadens our horizons and allows us to have more options and more capabilities” (White assistant academy manager, category two academy)

This quote reflected work which has argued that where difference is recognised, diversity is more likely to be seen as an asset, rather than a liability (Cunningham, 2010). However, despite the seemingly progressive diversity mindset of these senior staff in youth academy coaching workplaces, some academy managers
appeared to commodify the cultural identities of BAME coaches, viewing them as resources. This somewhat suggested the racialisation of the BAME coaching staff in these instances. Cunningham has identified these patterns in the way that some organisations value racial minority coaches ‘principally for their ability to relate to and help recruit racial minority athletes’ (2010, p. 172). In light of employment patterns identified in chapter 6, this may contribute to the occupational segregation of BAME coaches, as research has noted the ways in which BAME coaches are employed in roles with high levels of interaction with BAME athletes (Cunningham, 2010). In this sense, the engagement of the above staff with the mandatory code can be considered a mechanism to boost numerical diversity for the sake of performative benefits, however the extent to which it represents a remedial and inclusive measure seemingly remains a moot point.

9.2.3 Organisational buy-in to the codes of recruitment

Taken together interview findings suggested that within youth academies where cultural diversity was positively valued and a colour conscious approach was adopted in the recruitment of coaches and players, there was a relatively strong level of organisational buy-in to the mandatory code’s principles of diversity and inclusivity. In these instances, the mandatory code was framed as a useful policy instrument which had encouraged a tangible processual shift away from networks-based approaches to coach recruitment to more formalised, equitable, and transparent systems of coach recruitment guided by cultural openness rather than cultural obstruction. One White academy manager reflects positively on these changing practices below:

“We’ve had problems in the past where we haven’t gone through that process. People have been in the job and have done the recruitment where they’d brought in a friend, an ex-colleague, so there’s never been a transparent recruitment process. Generally, it’s (mandatory code) helped everything just move to transparency in what we do. Everything has to be really clear and concise and overall transparent to everybody. There’s got to be a fairness to what you do” (White academy manager, category two academy)
Similarly, a number of staff to adopt these colour-conscious perspectives felt that the mandatory code’s encouragement of fairer and transparent recruitment systems stimulated a level of organisational reflection upon pre-existing recruitment processes. In this respect, a number of interviewees framed the mandatory code as encouraging a broadening of the vision of youth academies to ensure a wider talent pool is considered. The BAME academy manager of category three academy reflected on this below;

“We think any scheme that sort of especially enforces for you to consider the process has got to be good. For me you just want the right people for doing the right job and to give them an opportunity, if that’s what you’ve got to do and bring out a rule then that’s what it’s got to be.”

(BAME academy manager, category three academy)

9.3 Colour-blind approaches to coach recruitment

Colour-blind approaches are argued to embody the belief that ‘race’ is no longer of significant influence on the everyday experiences and social mobility of societal groups (Worthington et al, 2008). These beliefs were present amongst a significant number of youth academy and first-team staff who adopted colour-blind approaches to coach recruitment. Colour-blindness is argued to equate to the denial of the salience of ‘race’, a standpoint which is falsely assumed to be synonymous with an absence of racism (Ford and Airhihenbuwa, 2010). Bonilla-Silva has argued that colour-blind ideologies and related liberalist principles of meritocracy and ‘race’-neutrality have underpinned a resistance against stronger variants of liberal equality policies such as positive action or radical equality measures like affirmative action (2003). In this research, interview data indicated that colour-blind approaches frequently and strongly emerged in youth academy and first-team coaching workplaces, which appeared to underpin a lack of organisational buy-in to the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment. This section now turns to examine the ways in which these factors underpinned a more gestural engagement with both of these codes in youth academy and first-team settings.

9.3.1 Denial of racialised barriers in coach recruitment
Interview data indicated that a significant number of senior youth academy and first-team staff felt that ‘race’-specific barriers did not exist within coach recruitment. Rather, several interviewees suggested that the underrepresentation of BAME coaches was at least partially due to a fault of their own. These often-negative conceptualisations of BAME coaches were in some cases tied to dominant ideas around the presumed cultural identities of BAME coaches. Previous research into colour-blindness has exemplified these processes, as Gallagher outlines how colour-blind explanations for racialised inequity in society refer not to structural responsibility, but instead blame racial minorities ‘themselves for their poorer relative economic standing, seeing it as a function of perceived cultural inferiority’ (2003, p.32). In this research, for a number of senior staff the presumed cultural practices of BAME groups appeared to represent the ‘rationale for justifying racial inequality’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 39). Some interviewees felt that the ‘inherent’ embodied features of some BAME groups were incompatible with the attitudes deemed necessary to attain coach employment. This could be seen in the reflections of an academy manager at a category three academy who drew upon attitudinal stereotypes of BAME groups when discussing the underrepresentation of BAME coaches;

“One would be what ethnic players are like in general as players. So having worked in certainly under-deprived, kind of multicultural environments, sometimes your lads with different ethnicity, this is stereotypical but sometimes they do come with a little bit more attitude, a little bit less professionalism because the background they’ve got of family support isn’t always there. If you’re a manager, a coach, or a chief executive, you might relate to that when they, when Black and ethnic coaches try and become coaches, you might relate to what your experiences are of coaching that person as a player” (BAME academy manager, category three academy)

For this interviewee there was a perceived lack of fit between the organisational expectations of professional coaching workplaces and the attitudes of some BAME coaches. This perspective was representative of a number of senior staff who drew upon a ‘victim-blaming’ stance that indicated a belief that the position
of BAME coaches in the game was at least partially a fault of their own (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Other interviewees felt that a lack of sufficient motivation possessed by BAME coaches also served to underpin their underrepresentation. These perspectives indicated the existence of a form of cultural racism, whereby those BAME coaches who have not progressed through coaching pipelines are contrasted with the ‘Jeffersonian’ ideals of ‘hard work’, ‘desire’ and ‘motivation’ deemed to be possessed by coaches who have attained employment (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Burdsey 2011a; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). For example, a number of interviewees felt that that some BAME coaches lacked the effort required to take advantage of the opportunities they believed existed for them. In this respect, a White academy manager at a category two academy commented;

“I think they want the opportunity; they want to get that opportunity at professional clubs. I don’t know if ethnic coaches are pushing themselves enough to do that.” (White academy manager, category two academy)

The principle of meritocracy formed a key part of these arguments amongst senior staff. There was a feeling amongst these staff that if BAME coaches ‘just worked hard or harder, then they would be rewarded for their hard work and could achieve, realize, and reach their full potential’ (Milner IV, 2008, p. 343). This attitudinal focus upon the behaviours and motivations of marginalised groups is argued to deflected attention away from the effects of everyday, routinised and inequitable processes identified in chapter 6 (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). In this sense, a number of interviewees felt that racial inequities in professional coaching in sport were not an organisational or structural issue, but rather an individual one. This was illustrated by a White academy manager at a category two academy who similarly felt that success or failure in securing coach employment was solely down to the motivations of individual coaches;

‘I don’t see there being major barriers to be honest as I think with the amount of jobs there are available now, if people are proactive and they want to get involved then I think it’s quite easy” (White academy manager, category two academy)

For a number of interviewees, the existence of racialised barriers was inconsistent with their conceptualisations of a sport that they felt had made
significant progress in regard to equality and anti-racisms in recent decades. It has been argued that this discourse of racial progress has emerged from what Burdsey refers to as ‘the institutionalisation and relative successes of the anti-racist football movement over the last two decades – at the level of public consciousness raising, if not always in adopting effective anti-discriminatory measures’ (2014, p.432). A number of interviewees subscribed to these ideas, and felt that a relative reduction (as they believed there to be) of explicit, intentional and crude forms of racisms in men’s professional football coaching in England meant that racialised exclusion was no longer an issue in this arena. These perspectives largely failed to grasp more subtle and everyday forms of discrimination in their adherence to a formal equality model in which conceptualisations of racisms did not go beyond its most visible and direct forms (Johns and Green, 2009). For these interviewees, the possibility of racialised barriers emerging from the everyday operations of the coaching industry appeared to be incongruent with this narrow conceptualisation of discrimination and a rose-tinted view of the sport. For example, the White chief executive of a Championship club reflected that;

“I can’t envisage in any clubs having a conversation where the colour of somebody would come into consideration at all. I think generally the shock (recent racial discrimination case) that caused showed how unacceptable that is and he lost his job immediately for it. I think when I started in the early 2000’s that type of stuff would have been fairly commonplace, you know, people talking about players as Africans and humoring that they all have similar characteristics. I think that 20 years ago, you’d have had a lot of that. Now you don’t.” (White club chief executive, Championship club)

9.3.2 Liberalist ideologies in the coaching workplace

The colour-blind perspectives adopted by several interviewees placed great value on the liberal ideologies of meritocracy, ‘race’-neutrality and objectivity. Chapter 3 examined popular beliefs around the unfettered meritocracy felt to be present in professional sport and identified how talent and dedication are the normative explanations for any success in sport (Hylton, 2010). The consideration of any factors beyond this was argued to violate the inherent meritocratic values of sport (Hylton, 2010). However, whilst appearing to be
reasonable and progressive perspectives, these meritocratic ideals are argued to operate as a smokescreen which masks racially inequitable processes and maintains the exclusion of marginalised groups (Gillborn, 2008). Interview data suggested that these liberal ideologies were deeply embedded in a number of youth academy and first-team coaching workplaces, which seemingly underpinned a more perfunctory engagement with the mandatory and voluntary code. Amongst a significant number of youth academy and first-team staff, it was reported that the codes were a part of their recruitment practices. However, the codes were often negatively contrasted with what these interviewees felt were their own pre-existing meritocratic and inherently fair recruitment practices. This was particularly the case in regard to each code’s requirement to consider features beyond ability in the compilation of interview shortlists, a feature of the codes viewed by a number of interviewees with a degree of suspicion. For example, a White academy manager at a category three academy reported how ‘merit’ was his sole concern within recruitment processes;

“It goes back to what I said at the start of the interview; the best people get the jobs. That’s how it should be.” (White academy manager, category three academy)

This was also reported by a White academy manager at a category two academy, who adopted a similarly meritocratic perspective to the employment of coaching staff;

“People have got to be good enough, it doesn’t matter what colour of their skin or where they’re from they’ve got to be good enough to do the job and that’s the bottom of the line at the end of the day.” (White academy manager, category two academy)

These notions also appeared to be deeply embedded at the first-team level, as the White club chief executive of a League One club reflected;

“The simple truth of the matter is that ‘race’ and colour doesn’t come into it. We’re just looking for the best manager” (White chief executive, League One club)

For these interviewees, coach recruitment was framed as an objective and
neutral process, which positioned the mandatory and voluntary codes in a number of youth academies and first-team coaching workplaces as antithetical to normative processes of coach recruitment. This was also the case in regard to a number of interviewees who felt that the codes of recruitment presented a threat to equality of opportunity within youth academy and first-team coaching workplaces. Equality of opportunity discourse has been argued to be central to sport, where the success of athletes from a range of backgrounds has promoted the narrative that opportunities exist for all (Hylton, 2009, 2010). For Bonilla-Silva, equality of opportunity principles have traditionally limited the engagement of equality approaches which prioritise equality of outcome, due to the belief that equal treatment for all groups is the fairest way to ensure equality (2003). In this research, a number of youth academy and first-team senior staff felt that their recruitment processes were a ‘level-playing field’, where equal opportunity existed for coaches of all backgrounds. These equality of opportunity discourses were often merged with meritocratic values to present a rigorous defence of pre-existing recruitment practices. For example, the White chief executive of a League Two club reflected on the opportunities he felt were available at his club;

“There’s opportunities there for everyone. First you look at the candidate, you look at what they can do and what they can bring to the club and it genuinely just makes absolutely no difference whatsoever what their background is” (White chief executive, League Two club)

A number of interviewees framed the codes of recruitment as a challenge to the equality of opportunity that existed in their coaching workplaces and recruitment practices. As a result, there was a perception amongst some staff that those felt to benefit from a violation of the ‘sacredness’ of equality of opportunity would be viewed with suspicion. Research has identified the ways in which dominant groups dismiss harder variants of liberal equality by attaching a stigma of incompetence towards these measures and their potential beneficiaries (Heilman, 1994). Such a discourse of incompetence is argued to not only frame those individuals benefitting from positive action measures as incapable of ordinarily succeeding by their own merits, but also preserve the idea that those who achieve success under ‘normal’ conditions did so as a result of their own talents (Heilman, 1994). On this score, a number of interviewees affirmed the
work of Doane in the way they effectively framed the codes of recruitment as working to ‘privilege the underserving’ (Doane, 2006, p. 259). The codes of recruitment were framed by some youth academy and first-team staff as encouraging the employment of coaches who did not possess the requisite experiential and technical ability. For example, a White Chief executive at a League Two club indicated the reservations he held around the voluntary code in this respect;

“You’ve just got to be careful that it is all about appointing the best person for the job and we don’t basically put people into jobs that then suddenly within 6 months you’re extending their probation and then not being good enough and you’re having to get rid of them” (White chief executive, League Two club)

Relatedly, interview data suggested that a number of interviewees questioned the validity of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment due to their belief in the ‘race’-neutrality of coach recruitment practices and processes. Proponents of ‘race’-neutrality are argued to strip racial inequity and inopportunity of ‘their racial underpinnings’ (Lopez, 2003, p.81) A number of interviewees consciously and unconsciously did this in the ways they sought to remove ‘race’ from coach recruitment processes, as they framed particular features of coach recruitment and employment as ‘natural’ and experienced by all coaches. Bonilla-Silva has argued that such strategies are used by dominant White groups to preserve the ‘myth of nonracialism’ by downplaying the relevance of ‘race’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 28). A number of interviewees effectively rejected the necessity of the mandatory and voluntary codes on the grounds that some of the racialised barriers faced by BAME coaches were merely ‘just the way things were’. For example, a White academy manager at a category three spoke of the normality of informal recruitment methods, and suggested that attempts to challenge such practices and replace them with fairer alternatives were futile within the strongly networks orientated approaches embedded within the football industry;

“I guess there’s not many industries where a thousand people apply for a job, a thousand people get interviewed and the best candidate gets picked.
People get headhunted, people get recommended, people get second recommendations, friends of friends are recommended. It’s just a process a club will go through and they’re going to promote from internally. We’re not going to solve every issue, or ensure that every job that’s advertised and recruited is 100% completely, completely fair” (White academy manager, category three academy)

This perspective formed part of a pattern of views that pre-existing recruitment practices and the numerical imbalances they created were inevitable. On this score, a number of other interviewees felt that some of the barriers outlined in chapter 6 were experienced by all coaches. The ‘neutralisation’ of racially inequitable processes has been argued to ‘justifiably dismiss racial phenomena by reasoning which suggests natural occurrences’ (Bimper, 2015, p. 225). In framing such phenomena as ‘raceless’, it has been argued that dominant groups overlook their own complicity in maintaining racialised inequity and downplay the privileges they themselves have received as a result of their racial identity (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This is argued to maintain the impression of a neutral social order which is experienced in identical ways by all members of society (Haney-Lopez, 2003). These notions were exemplified by some interviewees who felt that the dominant social and cultural networks of the football industry and the racially inequitable outcomes they encouraged were not a ‘racial’ issue. For these interviewees, the codes of recruitment sought to address everyday features of coach recruitment and employment that equally impacted upon White and BAME coaches. This was illustrated by a White academy manager at a category three academy who drew upon his own experiences as a coach;

“I’ve not necessarily felt the need to address something along these lines. I think the network thing, we all suffer from a network thing in as far as I’m probably never going to be a first-team manager because my network is not strong enough, you know, that is not because I’m White, it’s because my network isn’t strong enough” (White academy manager, category three academy)

These liberal principles adopted by a number of youth academy and first-team staff appeared to underpin a denial of diversity in a number of coaching
workplaces. This stood in stark contrast to those staff to adopt a colour-conscious approach to these issues. For example, a number of staff in this regard framed cultural diversity as incompatible with values of meritocracy and ‘race’-neutrality. As has been identified in previous research into affirmative action in the USA, this underpinned a challenge to the codes of recruitment in that they were seen to restrict the ability of organisations to recruit the ‘best’ staff (Yosso et al., 2004). In this sense, for a number of interviewees diversity was not of organisational value, rather it was effectively equated with a lack of quality. This was reflected in the following reflections from a White academy manager at a category three academy;

“I’ve got to be honest, it’s not a priority of mine to have a diverse coaching staff. My priority is to have the best people available.” (White academy manager, category three academy)

Similarly, another White academy manager at a category three academy indicated how meritocratic ideals created the illusion that an absence of diversity was natural in some coaching workplaces (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), as he reflected;

“For me it’s not about you have to have a diversity, I don’t think we do, I don’t think that’s important in my opinion, I think well what is important is we have the right people in the right places who can do the jobs.” (White academy manager, category three academy)

The meritocratic, objective and ‘race’-neutral principles presented above were symptomatic of a number of senior staff who demonstrated an alienation between themselves and their own roles in reinforcing the racialised power imbalances in professional coaching workforces. The absence of critical reflection in these instances is argued to be at least partially attributed to the normativity of whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Bradbury et al, 2018; Hylton, 2009). As with many other areas of society, industry and popular culture, sport is a place where whiteness is simultaneously central yet invisible (Johnson, 1999). The centrality of whiteness within sport is argued to frame the ways in which White people in positions of power experience and make sense of racial phenomena (Long and Hylton, 2002). For a number of White youth academy
and first-team staff, it appeared that their scepticism towards the code was premised upon their own racially unencumbered experiences of social and occupational mobility within the professional coaching industry (Bradbury, 2013; Feagin, 2010; Hylton, 2009). A number of interviewees felt that the pre-existing ‘meritocratic’ and ‘inherently fair’ recruitment methods they successfully negotiated within their own coaching careers were experienced equally by coaches of all backgrounds. This appeared to validate their beliefs that the mandatory and voluntary codes represented racially unfair and anti-competitive systems. For example, a White academy manager at a category two academy reflected on his own experiences of coach recruitment in asserting his opposition to the mandatory code’s explicit consideration of ‘race’;

“I just want my CV to be looked at exactly the same way as everyone else’s. The person who was making the decision felt I was good enough then it was down to me to go forward” (White academy manager, category two academy)

Similarly, a White academy manager at a category three academy reported that they themselves would not want to be considered on the grounds of anything other than their ability;

“I don’t know if I was a BAME candidate whether I would want that or whether I would just want people to look at my CV and kind of see how good or not so good I am.” (White academy manager, category three academy)

These quotes presented here and throughout this section were illustrative of the blindness of a number of White senior staff that their successes in coaching are at least partially due to their own ‘racial’ identities (Bradbury et al, 2018; Hylton, 2009). Colour-blind ideologies are argued to preserve the ‘illusion’ that the experiences of and opportunities available to White groups are neutral, objective and inherently fair (Hylton, 2009). These senior staff members appeared to internalise these ideas, and universalise their own experiences in attempts to demonstrate their discomfort with the mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment. This was illustrative of previous research, as Hartigan writes that ‘White people are beneficiaries of a host of seemingly neutral social
attitudinal implementation of codes, all of which seem to them at least to have no racial basis’ (1997, p.496). The challenge the codes of recruitment presented to the ‘racial blindness’ of these senior staff in this sense appeared to at least partially underpin their scepticism to these positive action measures.

9.3.3 Lack of organisational buy-in to the codes of coach recruitment

Interview findings suggested that it was at youth academies and first-team settings in which there was a lack of problem awareness of the racialised exclusion of BAME coaches and where senior staff operated a meritocratic, ‘race’-neutral and objective approach to coach recruitment, where there was a lower level of organisational buy-to the principles of racialised inclusion embodied within the codes of recruitment. Interview data suggested that for a number of youth academy and first-team staff, ideological and attitudinal resistance to the codes was premised on the belief that the mandatory and voluntary codes were ‘biased’ and ‘anti-competitive’ mechanisms, which effectively represented a form of positive or reverse discrimination. This was demonstrated in the number of staff who felt the codes undermined the ‘hard-earned’ and ‘deserved’ employment opportunities offered to those staff who had secured employment prior to the implementation of the codes. These notions underpinned the arguments of many colour-blind staff who ultimately felt that the codes of recruitment represented a corrupting influence upon their pre-existing recruitment processes. For example, a White academy manager at a category two academy reported his feelings on the mandatory code in this respect;

“I get the whole initiative and I understand the aim of it, I just don’t know if it’s the best way because I think people should get opportunities through their experiences their knowledge and their expertise.” (White academy manager, category two academy)

Interview data suggested that colour-blind reflections such as these had resulted in the positioning of these positive action measures as an ‘afterthought’ in coach recruitment processes. Although some staff indicated the procedural implementation of the codes, this appeared to have been done so as an ‘add-on’ to pre-existing, normative recruitment processes. For example, a White academy manager at a category two academy felt that the mandatory code had enacted
little change in the procedures and attitudes they adopted in the recruitment of coaching staff;

“It’s not really impacted on anything because like I’ll always be looking for the most positive kind of candidates that we’ve got… it’s not really affected us within the coaching department much” (White academy manager, category two academy)

Similarly, other interviewees described how ‘race’-neutrality and meritocracy continued to characterise recruitment practices despite the distinctly colour-conscious principles embedded in the mandatory code. The White academy manager of a category three academy reflected on the ‘redundancy’ of the mandatory code in this respect;

“I wouldn’t say for me personally in this club I don’t think that’s changed anything, I, you know, we couldn’t care less where they’re from, what colour their skin is as long as they’re good at what they do” (White academy manager, category three academy)

Not unsurprisingly in respect to the poor procedural implementation of the voluntary code identified in chapter 8, these perspectives also emerged from first-team coaching workplaces;

“I mean I don’t really think that we’re doing any different so I can only really speak from our club. I don’t think we’re doing anything any different really to what we’ve done previously” (White chief executive, Championship club)

The work of Bonilla-Silva argues that those who adopt a colour-blind perspective deny the salience of ‘race’ and racisms (2003). The perspectives of senior staff in this research suggested that those to adopt a colour-blind perspective also disputed the salience of anti-racisms. In this sense, for these senior staff to adopt a colour-blind approach the mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment appeared to represent measures which addressed issues that did not need to be addressed. For Wise, this is to be expected, as those who do not recognise the significance of ‘race’ are argued to be unlikely to notice racial discrimination, other than in its most egregious examples (2008). This also an argument outlined by
Van Dijk, who writes that ‘*when the dominant consensus is that there are no racisms, minority groups and their protests or other forms of resistance have a very hard time to be taken seriously*’ (1992, p. 96). In this sense, the mandatory and voluntary codes appeared to represent measures discordant with prevailing approaches to equality in these environments. This concurs with the work of Lusted, who affirms that within those sporting arenas which believe ‘*social equality as only being achieved through treating all individuals the same, there is an immediate, obvious conflict with a policy that advocates differential treatment*’ (2017, p.8). In this sense, it is perhaps likely that the gestural engagement with the codes of recruitment in these environments will likely only replicate the piecemeal incrementalism encouraged by the traditional equality of opportunity approaches of sports organisations to issues of underrepresentation and diversity.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to analyse the attitudinal implementation of the EFL’s mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment. In doing so, the chapter examined the existence of two distinct ideologies adopted by youth academy and first-team staff which were argued to underpin the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the codes of recruitment. It is important to note that although this chapter presented two distinct perspectives adopted by youth academy and first-team staff, in reality the binary colour conscious and colour-blind perspectives presented are rarely so pronounced. The messy and inconsistent perceptions interviewees held towards issues of ‘race’ and racisms and these positive action measures means that it is feasible that the same person may exhibit both of these perspectives. Nonetheless, this chapter asserts that the presence of either of these perspectives either encouraged or restricted the potential effectiveness of the codes of recruitment. Firstly, in examining colour-conscious perspectives, this chapter found that these approaches were exclusive to youth academy settings. Staff who adopted this approach were more likely to recognise the existence of racialised barriers experienced by BAME coaches and support the introduction of bespoke equality policies to begin to dismantle these racially inequal experiences. Colour-conscious senior staff were also found to be more likely to
value cultural diversity in the coaching workplace, who felt it provided a range of pedagogical, developmental and performative benefits for new and existing coaches and players, from both White and BAME backgrounds. These themes were argued to support the organisational buy-in to the codes of coach recruitment, in the belief that the codes encouraged transparent and equitable recruitment processes.

Secondly, this chapter examined the presence and implications of colour-blind approaches amongst senior staff at the youth academy and first-team level. This section found that senior staff to adopt this perspective were less likely to identify the existence of racialised barriers experienced by BAME coaches, instead indicating their belief that the underrepresentation of BAME coaches was chiefly a fault of their own, and not the actions and behaviours of key decision makers in youth academy and first-team workplaces. This section identified deeply embedded liberal ideologies of meritocracy, equality of opportunity and ‘race’-neutrality within coaching workplaces. These principles were deemed oppositional to the ideas of racial inclusivity embedded within the codes of recruitment, which were felt to be anti-competitive and biased in the ways they considered applicant features beyond ability. This section also argued that these liberalist framings of the codes were in part due to the belief of White senior staff in their own objective and ‘race’-neutral career trajectories. Taken together, these factors were felt to underpin a lack of organisational buy-in to the codes of recruitment. Senior staff were found to position the code as an afterthought, rather than a central operating principle in coach recruitment practices. This was argued to encourage a tokenistic implementation of the code which left the culturally unreflexive attitudinal approaches of these decision-making staff largely untouched.
10 Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will summarise and discuss the key findings of this thesis. Firstly, this chapter will re-iterate the broader context of this research, and re-state the aims, objectives and research questions of this thesis. This section will reflect on how in answering these questions this thesis made an original and significant contribution to existing academic knowledge. This section will finish with a reflection on how this research was undertaken, with particular attention paid to the applicability and utility of Critical Race Theory to this research. Secondly, in relation to the research questions this chapter will summarise the key empirical findings of this research from chapter 6, chapters 7 and 8, and chapter 9, and relate them to relevant elements of theoretical literature discussed in the main body of the thesis. Thirdly, this chapter will provide some empirically and theoretically informed recommendations for key organisational stakeholders, including governing bodies, club and youth academy executives, leadership and coaching staff, and coaches. Finally, this chapter will reflect on some methodological and theoretical strengths and limitations of this research. This chapter will then conclude with a discussion on potential areas of future research.

10.2 Research aims and objectives

This research sought to examine the representation and experiences of BAME coaches and the effectiveness of key positive action measures in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England. In investigating this, this research was undertaken on the premise that sport is a racial formation (Carrington, 2013; Hartmann, 2000; Hylton, 2010; Omi and Winant, 2004), where in spite of popular beliefs as to the contrary, ‘race’ and racisms continue to be salient factors in informing the shape and scope of equality of opportunities, experience and outcomes in sports (Carrington, 1998; Hylton, 2010). This was particularly evident within the sphere of elite sport across North
American and Western European settings, where an ever-increasing representation of BAME athletes in these environments has far outstripped the representation of BAME coaches in professional clubs and national organisations (Bradbury, 2013; 2014; Bradbury et al, 2018; Burdsey, 2007; Cunningham, 2010, 2012; DeHass, 2007; King, 2004; Lambourne & Higginson, 2006; Long et al., 2009; North, 2009; Sporting Equals, 2011; Sports Coach UK, 2011; Sports People’s Think Tank, 2014). Research into these imbalances has identified several explanations for these patterns of underrepresentation, a number of which are embedded in the routinised practices and processes of the organisation of elite sport (Agyemang and DeLorme, 2010; Cunningham, 2010; Fletcher et al., 2014; Lapchick, 2018; Norman et al, 2014; Regan and Cunningham, 2012; Sagas and Cunningham, 2005; Sanderson, 2010; Schinke et al, 2008; Singer et al, 2005; Wilson et al, 2007). This has particularly been the case in men’s professional football in England, where BAME groups attempting to secure coach employment at professional clubs have been found to be subject to a series of racialised barriers enmeshed into the fabric of the everyday operations of the professional football coaching industry (Bradbury 2014, Bradbury et al, 2018). These racialised experiences of BAME coaches are argued to have represented an institutionalised form of racism in the way BAME coaches are subject to racially inequitable experiences and outcomes (Bradbury et al, 2018). Despite the existence of commitments to equality and anti-racisms, the equality approaches of sporting organisations in Britain have traditionally failed to fully address the existence and impacts of these more subtle and nuanced racisms embedded in the routine operations and functions of elite sport (Lusted, 2017; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Where policies and measures do exist, these have largely misconceptualised both what racisms can be and where they are located and have consequently been hamstrung by a belief that discrimination and inequity is a product of external factors, rather than the internal operations of sports organisations and attitudes of their senior staff (Hylton, 2009; Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006). Such viewpoints have underpinned the development and implementation of formal and ‘softer’ variants of liberal approaches to equality by sports organisations in Britain, yet have historically limited an engagement with interventionist, ‘harder’ variants of liberal equality, such as positive action (Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006).
This research identified and examined the levels of representation and experiences of BAME coaches and the shape, scope and effectiveness of positive action measures designed to address racialised inequities in men’s professional football in England. In doing so, this research adopted a mixed methods approach which draws on surveys and interviews with BAME coaches and a range of organisational stakeholders, including senior staff at professional club first-team operations, youth academy managers, campaign groups and governing bodies. In meeting these aims, this research investigated the following three key research questions.

1. What are the representation and experiences of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England?

2. What is the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes in addressing racialised inequity in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England?

3. To what extent and in which ways is the implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes informed by the cultural attitudes of key decision makers at clubs?

In order to answer the research questions, a mixed methods research design was adopted. This enabled the collection of quantitative data to outline the representation of BAME coaches in youth academy coaching positions and extend knowledge on the patterns of representation of BAME coaches in the sport more broadly. Quantitative data also assisted in the analysis of the procedural implementation of the codes of recruitment. This data was gathered through the use of an online survey, which provided a convenient, time-efficient yet detailed ‘numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population’ (Creswell, 2014, p.155). The mixed methods research design adopted also allowed the collection of qualitative data, which elucidated these numerical findings in analyses of the experiences of BAME coaches in attempting to secure and sustain coach employment, and of the relationship between the procedural and attitudinal implementation of the codes of recruitment. The use of semi-structured interviews in the acquisition of this qualitative data enabled the collection of ‘important information about the topic of interest while giving the
participants the opportunity to report on their own thoughts and feelings’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 84). In respect to the research questions of this thesis and the underpinning theoretical framework, this research design therefore represented a pragmatic methodological framework which sought to ‘address the range and scope of new novel research questions emanating from new theoretical contributions’ (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3).

In answering these research questions, this thesis has made an original and significant contribution to extending academic knowledge in the field of ‘race’, ethnicity, and sport coaching in a number of ways.

Firstly, this thesis has built on and extended existing data sets as to the levels of representation of BAME coaches in men’s professional football. Prior research in this field has focused primarily at the first team level and in relation to senior academy positions (Sports People’s Think Tank, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Research of this kind has reflected the elite level focus of similar research undertaken in professional and college sports contexts in US sports (Lapchick, 2004, 2009, 2018) and in professional football in Europe (Bradbury et al, 2014). This research has extended and broadened knowledge in this field by generating original empirical data which identifies the representation and status of BAME coaches at all levels of the youth academy system at men’s professional clubs. For example, a survey of academy managers (chapter 6) offers new quantitative insights into the extent and scope of BAME representation as coaches and revealed patterns of hierarchical occupational segregation within these setting (see section 10.3 for a summary of these findings).

Secondly, the thesis has built on and extended knowledge as to the racialized experiences of BAME coaches in men’s football in England. Prior research in this field (as is the case with representation) has focused primarily on the experiences of BAME coaches with experience of working at first team level and in senior academy positions (Bradbury, 2013; Bradbury et al, 2018). Further, whilst this prior work has critically foregrounded the marginalized voices of these coaches, little attention has been paid to ascertaining the perceptions of stakeholders from dominant ethnicities in powerful decision-making positions.
within the game. This thesis has extended this methodological focus to incorporate the voices of BAME coaches working in both the adult and youth coaching infrastructures of men’s professional clubs, and examined the attitudes and experiences of key organizational stakeholders drawn from a range of dominant and marginalized ethnicities involved in the governance, leadership and coaching tiers of the sport. As Lusted has advocated for, this enabled consideration of overlapping and competing narratives to be heard and cross referenced in order to extend knowledge of the topic under review (2009). Findings in this regard revealed a range of ‘business-as-usual’ forms of racisms which were highly visible to a number of BAME coaches yet invisible to a range of (predominantly White) organizational stakeholders (see section 10.3 for a summary of these findings).

Thirdly, this thesis has built on and extended knowledge as to the procedural implementation and effectiveness of racial equality measures in men’s professional football in England. Little prior research has been undertaken in this specific field, whilst research in British sport more widely has examined the implementation of formal racial equality charters and standards. This research found that the implementation and effectiveness of these measures have been at least partially undermined by their audit-based approach which prioritize superficial outcomes over organizational change (Long et al, 2005; Spracklen et al, 2006). This thesis has extended this knowledge through examining the implementation of two positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England. Owing to their underutilization in British sport thus far, little was known of the procedural implementation and effectiveness of these specific and interventionist approaches, which demand not only evidence of action but also evidence of change within organizations. The approach adopted in this research has enabled an examination of how operational processes have been enacted at an organizational level. With particular respect to advertisements, applications, interviews and appointments (chapter 7 and 8), findings have revealed a piecemeal and at times performative implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment (see section 10.3 for a summary of these findings).

Forthly, this thesis has extended knowledge as to the attitudinal
implementation and effectiveness of racial equality measures in men’s professional football in England. Prior research in this broad area has focused upon the attitudes of policymakers in the arenas of local grassroots football governance in England (Lusted, 2009), and the implementation of racial equality measures in British sport more widely (Spracklen et al, 2006; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). This research has found that the dominance of Whiteness at the organizational level of sporting bodies has resisted the development of more interventionist racial equality measures. This thesis has built on and extended this knowledge in two ways. Firstly, this thesis has examined the attitudinal implementation of interventionist positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England, which in this instance were not merely options within a racial equality charter but instead an obligation (or expectation). Moreover, this thesis has examined not only the attitudes of policymakers and coaches, but also key organizational stakeholders drawn from a range of dominant and marginalized ethnicities involved in the governance, leadership and coaching tiers of men’s professional football in England. In doing so, this thesis has made explicit the impact of organizational cultures and power relations on the implementation and effectiveness of positive action measures in the coaching contexts under review. Findings in this regard identified that policy implementation and effectiveness are strongly linked to two competing racial ideologies adhered to by senior decision makers in the coaching contexts under review (see section 10.3 for a summary of these findings).

Fifthly, the thesis has drawn on and applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) to the topic under review. This theoretical (and methodological) framework centralises ‘race’ in its perspectives of inequality and inopportunity in society and argues that racisms are not isolated or aberrational acts, but rather are central and permanent aspects of the everyday realities of societal groups (Castaneda and Zuniga, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2003). In recent years, a number of sports scholars in the US, UK and continental Europe have drawn on the theoretical insights provided by CRT to examine the ways in which dominant liberal ideologies of colour blindness, race neutrality and meritocracy are played out in sporting contexts (Burdsey, 2011; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). In relation to the topics under review in this thesis, the work of Bradbury et al has offered some
useful theoretical analysis of the multi-layered barriers experienced by BAME coaches (2018). However only minimal attention had been paid thus far to examining the extent and ways in which such dominant ideologies and practices have informed the shape, scope and efficacy of racial equality measures in sport.

Critical Race Theory was central to the ways in which this research was undertaken and was a relevant and useful theoretical tool throughout. A CRT framework in research has been argued to hold significant utility in challenging ‘the reproduction of established practices, knowledge and resources that make up the social conditions that facilitate colour-blindness, ‘race’ logic and racialized processes’ (Hylton, 2010, p.351). This squared firmly with this research, and it’s ‘race-conscious’ aims of examining the representation and experiences of BAME coaches and the effectiveness of key positive action measures in coach recruitment in men’s professional football. In investigating these aims in the arena of professional sport where popular and media discourses regularly obfuscate and deny the contemporary salience of ‘race’ and racisms to experience and opportunity (Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2018), CRT’s methodological and theoretical tenets provided a particularly useful and instructive framework in investigating the research questions of this thesis. For example, CRT’s centralisation of ‘race’ and racisms encouraged a distinctly ‘race’-conscious research design and analysis, which sought and foregrounded the voices of BAME coaches in identifying the racialised barriers present in the coaching industry of men’s professional football in England. Similarly, CRT encourages a ‘de-cloaking’ of ‘the institutional and ideological racial purpose behind the “color-blind” myth of merit’ (Parker, 1998, p.48). Informed by CRT’s critiques of these dominant liberal ideologies, claims of ‘race’-neutrality and colour-blindness espoused by a number of participants in this research were not viewed uncritically as evidence of objectivity and meritocracy in sport. Instead, CRT encouraged an analysis which deconstructed these liberal ideologies, revealing how colour-blind and meritocratic claims reformulate and reproduce the hegemonic whiteness and it’s related privileges embedded in senior coaching hierarchies. Methodologically speaking, the use of CRT in this research also encouraged the development of a framework which could make
explicit the power imbalances in the coaching contexts under review. To this end, an engagement with both the excluded and the excluders in the coaching industry of men’s professional football in England assisted in illuminating the mechanisms by which power is maintained, exercised and experienced along racial lines.

10.3 Addressing the research questions: empirical and theoretical analysis

The previous four analysis chapters of this thesis have presented the empirical findings of the research. These empirical chapters focussed on three central aspects of this research; the representation and experiences of BAME coaches in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England (chapter 6); the procedural implementation of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment (chapter 7 and 8); and the attitudinal implementation of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment (chapter 9). This section now will outline the key findings of this thesis to emerge from these four data analyses chapters and locate them in theoretical tenets and relevant literature.

What are the representation and experiences of BAME coaches in men’s professional football in England?

This research question was investigated in chapter 6 of this thesis. This chapter found that there exists a historic and continuing underrepresentation of BAME coaches in senior first-team coaching positions. These patterns were found to be largely reflected in senior youth academy positions. However, across all youth academy coaching positions, primary data indicated an improved representation of BAME coaches which far outstripped statistics at the first-team level. Yet BAME coaches were found to be overrepresented in part-time positions at the youth academy level, and, reflecting first-team patterns, were found to be employed in a narrow geographical distribution of academies. Taken together, the representation of BAME coaches as a whole in the professional game appeared to indicate patterns of occupational segregation. This was in the way that BAME coaches were most frequently represented in coaching positions that were on the periphery of the most senior first-team positions. In regard to the experiences of BAME coaches in attempting to
secure employment in youth academy and first-team coaching, it was found that there exists a number of racialised barriers at the youth academy and first-team level. Limited access to elite level coach education, networks-based approaches to coach recruitment and racial bias and stereotypes in coach recruitment were all argued to underpin inequalities of opportunities, experiences and outcomes. These factors in particular instances were reflective of other sports coaching arenas in which BAME coaches are similarly underrepresented (Cunningham, 2010; Fletcher et al, 2014; Singer et al, 2010).

These barriers were embedded in the everyday operations of professional football coach recruitment and woven into the normative attitudinal approaches of key decision makers. The ‘everydayness’ of these racialised barriers and the representation figures they underpin is in this sense demonstrative of the ways in which ‘race’ and racisms are permanent and central features of the operation of professional sport (Hylton, 2009; Singer, 2009). Rather than aberrational or a product of the behaviours and attitudes of ‘rogue’ staff members within senior club first-team and youth academy hierarchies, these barriers within coach recruitment were argued to represent ‘business-as-usual forms of racism’ (Gillborn, 2006, p. 22), which emerged from conventional and widely accepted practices and processes in men’s professional football in England. In this sense, these barriers in coach recruitment at the senior first-team and youth academy level can be considered institutional forms of racism. This is in the way that the racially inequitable experiences of BAME coaches were underpinned by commonly overlooked, normalised, and structurally embedded racialised factors (Bradbury et al, 2018; Hylton and Lawrence, 2016; Ratna et al, 2015). The data presented in chapter 6 were reflective of the body of work which has examined the different ways in which the organisation and practice of sport are experienced by different racial groups (Burdsey, 2011; 2012; Hylton, 2009; Long, Robinson, & Spracklen, 2005; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016), and are reflective of the ways in which;

‘Off-field social rituals, the historical legacy of racial inequalities, failures in practice and policy and racialized intolerance converge to create conditions, across various sports, whereby white, able-bodied, middle-class, heterosexual men are disproportionally advantaged to obtain and maintain status as players,
coaches, and administrators’ (Hylton and Lawrence, 2016, p. 2742).

As the representational figures discussed in chapter 6 demonstrated, the vast majority of coaching and managerial positions in youth academies and senior first-team coaching workplaces are occupied by White men. Whiteness is the social and cultural norm within the coaching and leadership of elite sport (Bradbury et al, 2018; King, 2004; Sartore and Cunningham, 2006; Singer, 2005). The racialised barriers experienced by BAME coaches in this research are argued to be indicative of the dominance and privileges of whiteness within club first-team and youth academy coaching and administrative hierarchies.

Chapter 2 outlined how few members of dominant racial groups possess a ‘double consciousness', through which members of a particular racial group view themselves through the perspectives and ways of seeing the world of ‘the other’ (Delgado, 2001, Du Bois, 1965). This was evident in the findings of chapter 6 and also chapter 9 in that a number of these barriers were largely invisible or denied by predominantly White senior staff members in clubs and club academies. This indicated a dissociation amongst a number of White senior staff and the racially inequal experiences of BAME coaches in this sense, as for these staff racisms were framed as ‘an issue that people of color face and have to struggle with, but not as an issue that generally involves or implicates us’ (Frankenberg, 1993, p.6). The number of staff in this research who reported on their own ‘barrier-less’ negotiation of coach recruitment processes was also reflective of the relationship between Whiteness and the existence and denial of racialised barriers in this research. For these senior staff, their own career trajectories were not attributed to their Whiteness, rather it was a product of their own motivations and abilities. Such non-engagement with their own racialised identities strongly concurs with the work of Long and Hylton, who identify amongst White groups in sport an ‘unwillingness or inability to locate themselves’ (2002, p. 92).

What is the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes in addressing racialised inequity in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England?
Chapters 7 and 8 examined the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the mandatory and voluntary codes of coach recruitment. Chapter 7 found that the mandatory code’s development, implementation and communication were undermined by a relatively narrow range of voices in the consultation period prior to the code’s introduction. However, the code was found to represent a harder variant of liberal approaches to equality, which although stopping short of guaranteeing equality of outcome nonetheless sought to ensure equality of outcomes were more likely to be realised. This was apparent in the code’s ability to at least partially address some of the more institutional barriers to employment experienced by aspirant BAME coaches. This was most notable in the shift in a significant number of academies away from networks-based methods of recruitment towards formal four-step competencies-based methods which was found to provide a platform for BAME coaches to demonstrate their coaching skills and abilities, challenge racial bias and stereotyping, and ultimately provide a significant number of employment opportunities for BAME coaches.

Chapter 8 found that the voluntary code’s potential classification as a harder variant of a liberal approach to equality was severely restricted by its loose wording, in-built caveats and a domineering organisational input from professional clubs. This was found to restrict the code’s ability to forcefully stimulate conditions to shift recruitment processes from equality of opportunity towards equality of outcomes. This was evident in the minimal headway made by the code in addressing the racialised barriers outlined chapter 6. A generally poor adherence to the code was demonstrated in the reporting of all clubs on their continuation of informal coach recruitment methods which failed to formally advertise managerial and coaching vacancies or formally interview at least one suitably qualified BAME applicant. Recruitment practices were found to remain unregulated, with little progress appearing to be made in ‘opening up’ recruitment practices at clubs to the benefit of groups beyond those already in the dominant social and cultural networks of the football industry.

The procedural implementation of the mandatory code and the numerical outcomes it engendered indicated the potential this positive action measure has in addressing the systemic and ‘business-as-usual’ forms of discrimination.
10 Conclusion

outlined in chapter 6. The effectiveness of the code within youth academies suggested the potential of positive action in this instance to not only offset systemic inequality, but actively work to undoing it (Cunningham, 2000; Johns et al, 2014). For CRT scholars, the findings presented in chapter 7 are an indication that liberalism alone is not enough to address systemic inequality and inopportunity. Instead, interventionist, redistributive and ‘forceful’ measures attached to a sufficient degree of compliance are necessary to address institutionalised inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Hylton, 2009) (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Gillborn, 2006; McCoy and Rodricks, 2015). CRT scholars also argue that to ignore ‘race’ is to simply reproduce the current racial order (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; McCoy and Rodricks, 2015). In this sense, the distinctly colour-conscious principles of the code meet calls for the introduction of measures and policies which recognise that ‘inequity, inopportunity, and oppression are historical artefacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society’ (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p.29). In doing so, the mandatory code dispenses with a ‘race’-neutral approach and instead targets the ‘racial underpinnings’ of racialised exclusion and inequality (Lopez, 2003, p.81).

In relation to the CRT tenet of social justice, authors posit that social justice can only be realised if colour-conscious and redistributive approaches to challenging inequality are embraced (Hylton, 2008). What the mandatory code’s procedural implementation also reinforces is the significance of compliance in ensuring that this approach to social justice embedded in the mandatory code is realised. As the next section of this chapter will indicate, compliance is not the silver bullet to increasing the effectiveness of the codes of recruitment. However, this has encouraged the code’s initial redistribution of opportunities along ‘racial lines’, suggesting the stimulation of small but significant steps in encouraging social justice within the youth academy game (Hylton, 2009).

It is argued here that the voluntary code also recognises the salience of ‘race’. In specifically targeting BAME coaches, the voluntary code recognises that the racial identities of a number of BAME coaches is a significant factor in their underrepresentation in professional first-team coaching contexts. Similarly, in the pursuit of social justice the voluntary code squares firmly with CRT calls for
policies which move beyond the slow and incremental gains made by decades of equality policy rooted in liberalism (Hylton, 2005). Consequently, the contrasting effectiveness of the mandatory and voluntary codes reveals the significance of both the details of the codes and their implementation. On this score, the voluntary code did not have the same level of compliance attached to it as the mandatory code. As chapter 8 illustrated, clubs were left with, and often exercised, the option to ignore the code’s central principles. Whilst compliance can often be associated with a tickbox approach to policy implementation within organisations (Ahmed, 2007), the absence of compliance within the voluntary code means that set against the embedded hegemonic Whiteness in the leadership and decision-making tiers of British sport, the code lacks even a fighting chance to realise the potential of its colour-conscious and interventionist principles (Dwight and Biscomb, 2018; Fletcher and Hylton, 2018; Hylton, 2005).

In this sense, the implementation of the voluntary code has not gone beyond the merely performative. As has been identified in previous analyses of other racial equality policies undertaken by Ahmed, organisational and club commitments to the voluntary code in this instance appear to have been equated with the ‘doing’ of anti-racisms (2006). Ahmed has conceptualised this false equation of commitment and action in relation to the implementation of equality policy as non-performativity (2006). On this score, the EFL and its member clubs showed a commitment to addressing the underrepresentation of BAME coaches in the game by introducing this innovative policy. However, the inaction of clubs to properly implement it demonstrates how without compliance and a true understanding of the nature of the problem ‘having good policies becomes a substitute for action’ (Ahmed, 2006, p. 117). In this regard, the implementation of the voluntary code of coach recruitment chimes strongly with Ahmed’s work as she writes that;

‘Having a race-equality policy, especially having a “good race-equality policy,” is about making an institutional commitment public. The documents are read as signs of commitment and in turn seem to commit the institution to doing something. Or do they?’ (Ahmed, 2006, p.9)
The findings of chapter 8 reinforce Ahmed’s assertion that the existence of policies should not be taken as evidence that the inequities targeted by a policy have started to be addressed (2006). This has previously been identified within equality agendas whereby commitments from policymakers and senior-decision makers fail to fully establish the ‘necessary conditions to foster change in their own sphere of influence’ (Ahmed, 2006, p. 110). This is particularly pertinent to the implementation and effectiveness of the voluntary code, and speaks to a sense of complacency on the part of the EFL in assuming that the introduction of the voluntary code in its current guise would stimulate changes in organisational processes, particularly, as the next section discusses, when organisational cultures remain so resistant.

To what extent and in which ways are the implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes informed by the cultural attitudes of key decision makers at clubs?

This research question was investigated in chapter 9. Findings presented two distinct ideologies adopted by youth academy and first-team staff which were argued to underpin the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the codes of recruitment. Staff adopting a colour-conscious perspective within youth academy settings were argued to be more likely to recognise the existence of racialised barriers experienced by BAME coaches and support the introduction of bespoke equality policies. These staff were also found to be more likely to value cultural diversity in the coaching workplace, and to feel that it provided a range of benefits for new and existing coaches and players, from both White and BAME backgrounds. These themes were argued to support the organisational buy-in to the codes of coach recruitment, in the belief that the codes encouraged the creation of transparent and equitable recruitment processes valued by these senior staff. Amongst a larger number of senior staff however, a colour-blind perspective was adopted which was argued to be less likely to identify the existence of racialised barriers experienced by BAME coaches. Instead, these staff indicated their belief that the underrepresentation of BAME coaches was largely a fault of their own, and not the actions and behaviours of key decision makers in youth academy and first-team workplaces. These staff were also argued to be informed by and adhere to liberal ideologies
of meritocracy, equality of opportunity and ‘race’-neutrality. These principles were deemed oppositional to the mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment in the ways the codes considered features beyond ability within recruitment processes. Taken together, these factors were felt to underpin a lack of organisational buy-in to the codes of recruitment, in the way that senior staff positioned the code as a tick box gesture, rather than a central operating principle in coach recruitment practices.

The findings presented in chapter 9 indicated the significance of ideological constructs of ‘race’ and racisms in informing the potential effectiveness of anti-racisms measures. The salience of ‘race’ to the professional football coaching industry was identified by a small number of senior staff. However, the damaging effects of a colour-blind ideology were demonstrated by staff who failed, consciously or unconsciously, to grasp these notions. This is not particularly surprising for Milner, who writes that;

‘Individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds may find it difficult to even recognize the salience, permanence, effects, and outcomes of racism because race and racism are so deeply rooted and embedded in our ways and systems of knowing and experiencing life’ (Milner, 2007b, p. 390)

The findings presented in chapter 9 were illustrative of the ways in which a blindness to issues of ‘race’ is not the most appropriate way to challenge discrimination that results from every day, seemingly ‘natural’ processes (Hylton, 2009). From a CRT perspective, the colour-blind ideologies present amongst a number of senior may be explained with reference to Bonilla-Silva’s frames of colour-blind racism. These frames were employed by many senior staff in this research in their interpretations of the racial inequities in coach recruitment in men’s professional football in England. This allowed these groups to explain racial inequality and discrimination in distinctly non-racial terms, all the whilst appearing ‘liberal’ and ‘progressive’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p.26).

For example, a number of senior staff drew upon the cultural racism frame in the ways in which they denied the existence of racialised barriers. This frame posits that biological racisms have in some instances mutated into cultural and codified racisms which subscribe to perceived essential and fixed
characteristics of different ‘racial’ groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Such racisms are argued to position BAME groups ‘as culturally rather than biologically inadequate’ (Rodriquez, 2006, p. 648). Similarly, in this research, the underrepresentation of BAME coaches for some senior staff in the game was often attributed to the ‘perceived cultural inferiority’ of BAME coaches, who were deemed to lack the levels of motivation and desire possessed by successful (White) coaches (Gallagher, 2003, p.32). This strategy adopted by some senior staff placed an assumed responsibility for the underrepresentation of BAME coaches firmly on ‘their’ shoulders (Bonilla- Silva, 2003). This deflected attention from the ways in which the normative institutional arrangements identified in chapter excluded a number of BAME coaches (Ahmed, 2012; Rankin-Wright et al, 2016). Important to note here however is that these perspectives were not exclusively held by White coaches, as a small number of BAME interviewees drew upon discourses of cultural inferiority towards some other BAME groups. This was somewhat indicative of both the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives within the term ‘BAME’, and the operational and hegemonic power of whiteness to frame discourses around BAME groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

These ideas also evoked the minimisation of racism frame, which is argued to often operate in tandem with the cultural racism frame (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). A number of senior staff demonstrated this frame in the way they disputed the salience of ‘race’ as a factor in explaining the underrepresentation of BAME groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The salience of ‘race’ in the coach recruitment processes of professional clubs was regularly downplayed by these senior staff, who felt that any racial discrimination to exist in the sport was aberrational or uncharacteristic. A number of White coaches based this on their own seemingly ‘race’-neutral negotiation of the professional coaching industry. These perspectives however viewed ‘discrimination through the narrow lens of overt, outrageously racist acts’ (Harper, 2012, p. 12); a perspective blind to more nuanced, subtle and embedded forms of discrimination. For these staff, these strategies of minimisation rendered the mandatory and voluntary codes obsolete, as the codes jarred with the dominant consensus that racisms, as senior staff understood them to be, were not a significant feature of the professional coaching industry (Van Dijk, 1992).
The frame of naturalisation of racism was drawn upon by senior staff who attributed racial inequities to the ‘naturally occurring’ processes and practices of coach recruitment (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). In this respect, a number of interviewees effectively downplayed the significance of ‘race’ to processes which were felt to be experienced in equal ways by both White and BAME coaches. In doing so reinforced what Bonilla-Silva refers to as the ‘myth of nonracialism’ (2003, p.28). This was achieved in the way that some senior staff reported that pre-existing recruitment processes and the numerical imbalances they created were ‘unavoidable’. This in particular respect to the continuing practice of casual and networks-based methods of recruitment. These claims as to the ‘inevitability’ of these features of coach recruitment allowed these senior staff however to ‘justifiably dismiss racial phenomena by reasoning which suggests natural occurrences’ (Bimper, 2008, p. 225).

Those senior staff to draw upon liberal values of meritocracy, ‘race’-neutrality and objectivity regularly drew upon the frames of abstract liberalism. Whilst appearing to be reasonable and progressive viewpoints, these meritocratic discourses, “despite their apparent concern for equity and justice, currently operate as a mechanism by which particular groups are excluded from the mainstream” (Gillborn, 2008, p.30). For example, the frame of abstract liberalism was present in the ways in which a number of senior staff viewed the requirement embedded within each code to consider features beyond ability within coach recruitment processes with a degree of suspicion (Hylton, 2009). The perspectives of these staff concurred with the work of Bonilla-Silva, who argues that these liberal ideologies perspectives valorise ‘Jeffersonian’ ideas of talent, motivation and hard work (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Upon this foundation, these staff advocated a non-interventionist perspective towards equality policy in the belief that these liberalist ideals would be threatened. For these interviewees, any ‘social change should be the outcome of a rational and democratic process’, and not of the coercive capacity of authoritative organisations, who at times were portrayed as meddling and preoccupied with political correctness (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 34).

Taken together, these perspectives, and this research, has demonstrated the ways in which White groups can seem ‘fair’ and even ‘progressive’, whilst at the
same time resist practical attempts to challenge systemic racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). These frames were thus utilised by those benefitting from the racial formation of professional sport in Britain to maintain their positions of dominance and power (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). These narratives are relatively commonplace in sports more broadly and are demonstrative of the propensity of powerful White groups to universalise their own ‘race’-neutral (as they believed them to be) experiences of social and occupational mobility and the related benefits afforded by White privilege as the cultural norm (Bradbury 2013, Hylton 2009). These findings are illustrative of the ways in which Whiteness and colour-blindness continues to underpin the experiences of racial groups in increasingly hidden and seemingly neutral ways. The reciprocal relationship between these factors has been shown to support the denial of both the existence of racisms, and the need for positive action measures designed to address racialised inequality.

10.4 Practical recommendations for football stakeholders

The commitment to social justice embedded in a CRT approach encourages the embedding of social justice not just in the research process, but also as a research objective (Solórzano and Bernal, 2001). In order to fulfil this objective, CRT should seek to identify strategies or policies which may progress the challenge to address racially inequitable state of affairs (Parker, 1998). As a consequence, through the production of substantial literature review chapters, engagement with theoretical and methodological principles of CRT, and the generation of quantitative and qualitative data I believe the key findings of this thesis supports several practical, policy-based recommendations for the advancement of social justice in men’s professional football coaching in England. These practical recommendations could have significant transferability to other sports considering the potential introduction of similar measures. In respect to the participants of this research, these recommendations are related to three tiers; governance, clubs, and coaches, and are outlined below;

**Governance**

This thesis noted the inconsistent levels of support and communication provided
by the EFL beyond the initial introduction of these measures, and the reliance this placed on the pre-existing attitudes of senior decision makers to each code and related issues of diversity and inclusivity. More holistic efforts are needed from the EFL to encourage a shift in attitudes and a stronger level of organisational buy-in at club academies and first-team hierarchies to the core values of diversity and inclusivity on which the codes are based. This should include the delivery of relevant cultural awareness training for senior staff at youth academies and professional clubs. This training should have a strong focus upon making known the relevance and applicability of the code to both tiers of the game and providing demonstrative examples of the inequity embedded in the pre-existing recruitment processes of some youth academies and many professional club first-teams. Delivered properly, this training should also go some way to ‘destigmatising’ these positive action measures in the minds of some decision makers who demonstrated their fundamental problem with the basic principles of positive action. This training should also work to increase understanding of the social and economic value and beneficial impacts of the cultural diversity in the coaching workplace, as outlined by participants at various stages in this research.

The production of a uniform guidance document should support this pedagogical work, as should a standardised checklist of good practice in relation to each of the four procedural stages of the codes: advertising, applications, interviews, and appointments. The inclusion of clubs and senior staff to have displayed strong levels of procedural and attitudinal implementation to these codes in this process could offer utility in increasing the levels of organisational buy-in to these codes. Advocates of the codes and their testimonies could encourage the sharing of good practice between youth academy and first-team environments. Such a document would create a tangible piece of practical guidance to limit ‘club-to-club’ inconsistencies in the practical delivery of these codes and encourage a more uniform and consistent approach across the game to the recruitment of coaching staff.

Whilst this thesis focussed upon the actions and policies of the EFL, it should not be forgotten that this is only one of the bodies governing men’s professional football in England. A number of interviewees reported their impressions that
governing bodies in the game were taking care of ‘their piece of the pie’, without meaningful cross-sport communication or action on issues of equality and diversity. A more holistic approach from all bodies in the game may help to ‘join up’ different aspects of the coaching pipeline in the game. For example, the Premier League may reflect on how the absence of a Rooney-Rule type policy in their competition may undermine both the efforts taking place in the leagues directly below and the work of the Football Association to implement a Rooney-Rule type initiative in future appointments across the national team set up. Further action on this score may also include the production of a ‘ready-list’ by the LMA or the PFA of available BAME coaches with requisite coaching qualifications which could be circulated to youth academy and senior first-team hierarchies.

Clubs

Within youth academy and first-team coaching workplaces, this guidance could be further extended to ensure that the demographic make-up of candidate selection and interview panels (for jobs at all levels of seniority) are more culturally diverse. This may at least partially offset the scepticism that some BAME coaches at both levels of the game had towards interview scenarios. Moreover, greater cultural diversity may provide a cultural check on the normalised hegemonic whiteness in these settings, and in doing so both neutralise potential racial biases and counter possible ‘similar-to-me’ effects in employment decisions (Cunningham, 2010; Lin et al., 1992; Mount et al., 1997). After interviews, summative and formative feedback should be provided to unsuccessful candidates on a consistent basis. Based on the testimonies of a number of BAME coaches and key stakeholders, this would have the dual impact of increasing confidence amongst BAME coaches that they were part of a transparent and meaningful process and help them reflect on the interview process to better prepare for future applications.

To ‘bolster’ these measures, clubs (and the EFL) should also work to implement a far more rigorous system of monitoring and recording of the numbers of BAME coaches to apply and progress through recruitment processes, and of the number of youth academy and professional clubs to adhere to the ‘interview
guarantee/expectation’ embedded into each code. Senior decision makers reported a piecemeal system of monitoring and recording of these codes, whereby a number of coaching workplaces were either aware or unaware of an online data entry portal. Whether this was miscommunication or misunderstanding from clubs or individual interviewees, such inconsistencies suggested that the EFL’s ability to record data and better judge the impacts and effectiveness of the codes was severely restricted. The implementation of a systematic monitoring of the impacts of each code would allow clubs and the EFL a firm methodological platform on which to review the numerical impacts of the code and evidence any potential year-on-year statistical upsurge or downturn generated by the code’s procedural implementation.

The inconsistent levels of awareness of the codes amongst BAME coaches appeared to negatively impact upon their levels of applications for coaching roles during the first year of their implementation. A press release at the outset of their introduction seemingly reached only a limited number of potential beneficiaries of these codes. Consequently, the EFL should strive to widely and regularly publicise their existence and impacts on a variety of platforms, including social media which BAME coaches identified as an increasingly utilised recruitment platform by professional clubs. This may at least partially assist in stimulating an increased number of applications amongst BAME coaches for club and club academy coaching roles. Moreover, publicising successful BAME candidates to have benefited from the codes may also help to improve currently mixed levels of enthusiasm towards and engagement with the code amongst a significant number of BAME coaches.

**Coaches**

Finally, BAME (and White) coaches may reflect on how their membership of bodies such as the LMA or PFA could be used as a form of soft power. The formation of parallel bodies comprised of coaches (both BAME and White) dissatisfied with the current state of affairs experienced by BAME coaches may create a powerful organisation which sits both outside and within the existing football landscape. Such a body may advocate for increased pace of change in the development of policy like the mandatory code.
Taken together, it is argued that the adoption of these procedurally adaptive and culturally reflexive measures will help professional clubs and club academies to develop and embed a more inclusive, equitable and formalised operational approach to coach recruitment than has been the case in the past. This could ensure that initial statistical advances in the representation of BAME coaches has continued longevity over time.

10.5 Strengths, limitations and directions for future research

This research has produced empirically original findings which contribute to the existing field of knowledge. Having completed this research, there are several strengths and limitations which are important to note. A significant strength of this research concerns its originality. In relation to datasets on BAME representation in coaching and leadership position in sport, this research has extended and broadened knowledge by generating original empirical data which identifies the representation and status of BAME coaches at all levels of the youth academy system at men’s professional clubs. For example, a survey of academy managers (chapter 6) offers new quantitative insights into the extent and scope of BAME representation as coaches and revealed patterns of hierarchical occupational segregation within these setting (see section 10.3 for a summary of these findings). In synthesis with existing data, it has provided a more layered account of the representation of BAME coaches within both the adult and youth coaching infrastructures of professional football clubs in England.

In relation to the racialized experiences of BAME coaches in men’s football in England, this thesis extended this methodological focus to incorporate the voices of BAME coaches working in both the adult and youth coaching infrastructures of men’s professional clubs, and examined the attitudes and experiences of key organizational stakeholders drawn from a range of dominant and marginalized ethnicities involved in the governance, leadership and coaching tiers of the sport. As has been called for in the literature, this approach enabled consideration of overlapping and competing narratives to be heard and cross referenced in order to extend knowledge of the topic under review (Lusted, 2009). Findings in this regard revealed a range of ‘business-as-usual’
forms of racisms which were highly visible to a number of BAME coaches yet invisible to a range of (predominantly White) organizational stakeholders.

In relation to the procedural implementation and effectiveness of racial equality measures in men’s professional football in England, this thesis has extended knowledge by examining the implementation of two positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England. Little was previously known of the procedural implementation and effectiveness of these groundbreaking and interventionist approaches. In investigating the procedural implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment, the approach adopted in this research has enabled an examination of how operational processes have been enacted at an organizational level. With particular respect to advertisements, applications, interviews and appointments (chapter 7 and 8), this approach has revealed a piecemeal and at times performative implementation and effectiveness of the English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment.

In relation to the attitudinal implementation and effectiveness of racial equality measures in men’s professional football in England, this thesis has built on and extended this knowledge in two ways. Firstly, this thesis has examined the attitudinal implementation of long-resisted interventionist positive action measures in men’s professional football coaching in England, which in this instance were not merely options within a racial equality charter but instead an obligation (or expectation). Moreover, this thesis has examined not only the attitudes of policymakers and coaches, but also key organizational stakeholders drawn from a range of dominant and marginalized ethnicities involved in the governance, leadership and coaching tiers of men’s professional football in England. This approach has made explicit the impact of organizational cultures and power relations on the implementation and effectiveness of positive action measures in the coaching contexts under review. Findings in this regard identified that policy implementation and effectiveness are strongly linked to two competing racial ideologies adhered to by senior decision makers in the coaching contexts under review.

Finally, CRT scholarship has thus far only paid minimal attention to examining
the extent and ways in which such dominant ideologies and practices have informed the shape, scope and efficacy of racial equality measures in sport. This thesis has extended work in this field by examining the utility of CRT as a theoretical mechanism through which to examine how attitudes towards the salience of race and racisms have impacted on the implementation and effectiveness of positive action measures designed to address racialised inequities in coaching in men’s professional football in England.

Assisting the original contribution to knowledge provided by this thesis, another strength of this research was the range of methods it utilised. The blending of quantitative and qualitative methods in this research illustrated the ways in which pragmatic methodologies are useful in providing unique insight to novel research questions (Hesse-Biber, 2010). This mixed methods approach enabled an investigation of the relationship between procedures and attitudes in the implementation and effectiveness of positive action measures in men’s professional football in England. Concerning methodology, this research benefitted from the range of voices it heard. The use of Critical Race Theory in the research supported a research process and analysis which gave voice to marginalised stories from BAME coaches rarely heard in the practice and organisation of elite sport (Hylton, 2008). This research was also strengthened however by its focus upon not only marginalised but also dominant groups in sport. This provided a more rounded and informed data analysis process which drew upon a significant amount of diverse experiential knowledge. In doing so this research met the calls of scholars such as Lusted, who argue that ‘shifting attention from the excluded and onto the excluders in local sport appears to be a necessary and long-overdue project; one that might help further to broaden our apparently limited understanding of the origins and nature of racism in football’ (2009, p.724).

Regarding the limitations of this research, a number of these were identified in the reflexive methodological discussions at the end of chapter 5 (section 5.10). In a methodological sense, analysis of the mandatory and voluntary code’s procedural and attitudinal implementation and its effectiveness and impacts were arguably constrained by the relatively small number of respondents, particularly at the first-team level. This may have implications for the
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generalisability and transferability of these findings (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). However, respondents did represent a range of different leagues and geographical areas, and as Silverman writes, even if the construction of a sample large enough to be representative was achieved, ‘the sample size would likely be to be so large as to preclude the kind of intensive analysis usually preferred in qualitative research’ (Silverman, 2000, p.102). Analysis of the mandatory code did represent a collection of more rigorous and transferable findings. However, the numerical data collected in this research might have been more insightful and impactful were data collected on the positions to which BAME coaches were appointed. This would have provided important information which could have shed further light on patterns of mobility and occupational segregation in youth academy coaching environments.

There were also several theoretical limitations and questions to emerge from this thesis. For example, this research somewhat homogenized the experiences of a diverse group of people. The majority of BAME participants in this research were of black Caribbean and black African heritage, and as a consequence the use of the term BAME throughout this thesis often largely referred to these groups. Despite this, British Asian groups formed a small but not insignificant sample of the overall research participants. Although British Asians are classified as a BAME group in Britain, previous research has found that these groups can experience distinct patterns of racialized exclusion and racisms due to their (real or perceived) ethnic and cultural identities (Burdsey, 2007). These experiences may have been somewhat diluted in this thesis, as the marginalized voice presented is a composite of largely Black (and male) experiences. This is a broader issue in ‘race’ and ethnicity scholarship, as Gonzales-Sobrino and Ross write that ‘there is a profound need to explore the experiences of new (and old) racial and ethnic groups that transgress the colour binary, even as they are informed by its historical and social structural dominance’ (2018, p. 507). The development of theoretical subgroups such as LatCrit, TribalCrit and DesiCrit is a sign that CRT scholars in North America have started to negotiate these difficult theoretical questions (see Solorzano and Yosso, 2001; Brayboy, 2005; Harpalani, 2013). In Britain however, CRT scholarship is still to fully branch out in a way so as to better capture the
experiences of different minoritized groups, as the principal focus has remained upon the experiences of black groups of Caribbean and African heritage. Future CRT scholarship (my own included) should consider how intra-BAME experiences may be adequately examined whilst maintaining a focus on hegemonic whiteness.

The Black/White binary often consciously or unconsciously reinforced by CRT scholarship is not an issue which exclusively pertains to BAME groups (Cole and Maisuria, 2007). These sentiments are also applicable to White groups. As was made clear in chapter two the focus on hegemonic whiteness in this research relates to the system of racial domination that reinforces the power of White interests, and not merely an attack on White people (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). However, whiteness is a concept which may be homogenously applied to a wide range of privileges or disadvantages linked to socioeconomic status, nationalities and other indices amongst White groups (Cole and Maisuria, 2007). This point is made by Cole and Maisuria, who argue that whilst the (predominantly) White (and male) ruling class experience numerous benefits due to their status, ‘it is certainly not white people as a whole who are in this hegemonic position’ (2007, p. 96). As is sometimes the case in CRT scholarship, the centralization of ‘race’ and racisms may not consistently reflect on these important nuances and in doing so may paper over the disadvantage embedded in the intersection of ethnicity with other indices. For example, in this research, stories somewhat lost were from BAME coaches who reported that some of their White working-class colleagues lacked the social networks and financial supports required to access high level coaching qualifications. As has been advocated by some authors (Cole, 2017; Lawrence and Davis, 2019), future CRT scholarship may consider how other theoretical approaches such as Marxist or Feminist studies may work to enrich CRT scholarship designed to deconstruct the power imbalances in sport coaching and challenge multi-layered forms of exclusion.

Similarly, CRT is a political theory which dispenses with a number of traditional standpoints present in qualitative research, such as objectivity and colorblindness (Hylton, 2010). In this research, and CRT-informed work more widely, the critical lens of CRT has encouraged the development of a framework
which seeks to capture and foreground the lived experiences of marginalized communities (Hylton, 2010). However, at times within this research this approach may have served to silence some marginalized individuals whose perspectives do not align with some key theoretical tenets of CRT. For example, CRT claims that rather than aberrational racisms are endemic to society and sport (Delgado and Stefancic, 2000; Lawrence and Davis, 2019). Although a dominant theme across the research, racialized inopportunity and exclusion were not universally identified by BAME participants in this research. As a likely consequence, the voluntary and mandatory codes of recruitment were not uniformly supported by BAME individuals. Within the Black/White binary sometimes constructed by CRT, these perspectives represent a conceptual anomaly. One task of CRT going forward may be to reflect on the ways that the theory may inadvertently ‘marginalize the marginalized’ in this respect. In particular, this thesis has demonstrated CRT’s utility in making sense of the experiences of the excluded and the excluders, but what of those groups identified by CRT as excluded whose attitudes would be more associated with those of the excluders, and vice versa? Whilst it is likely this is due to the operation of whiteness and it’s power to impact upon the perspectives of all groups, much more work needs to be done to examine how this operation works in practice, in what context, and to what ends. The issues discussed here and above are theoretically interesting and as yet unresolved area of CRT scholarship.

This thesis examined a snapshot of two positive action measures in their relative infancy, revisiting this study with longitudinal research would be useful to capture change over time and to provide benchmark figures which could be compared at regular intervals. The benefits of such research are exemplified by authors who have tracked racial equality policies over a period of years to examine the implementation and effectiveness of policies after initial policy commitments or successes (Dwight and Biscomb, 2018; Shaw, 2007; Spracklen et al., 2006). Regarding previously discussed limitations around intersectionality, an analysis of the issues discussed throughout this thesis in women’s professional football would be an important step to challenging the male-dominated focus of not only ‘race’ and ethnicity research but also CRT
scholarship in sport. Research on the intersection of gendered and racialised experiences in sport coaching remains sparse (see Borland and Bruening, 2010; Carter-Francique, 2017; Rankin-Wright et al., 2019). Analysing the issues faced by female BAME coaches in professional football would enhance this small existing corpus and would provide a more holistic perspective of the lived experiences of BAME groups in professional sport coaching contexts. Throughout this research a critical focus has been placed upon hegemonic whiteness and the power imbalances it maintains. Yet this research could not examine the most senior decision-making and policymaking levels of the sport, in particular senior figures involved in strategic and governance roles at the FA, EFL and the Premier League. It is these groups who traditionally decide on the nature, scope and extent of equality measures and as such investigation into how policy decisions are made and whether the same racial ideologies are present at this level of the organisation of the sport would provide insightful data into the most senior decision-making levels of the sport. As this and other research has noted, the promotion of racial equality policy is hindered by a lack of understanding in sport of the dominance of Whiteness, and the ways it marginalises BAME experience (Long and Hylton, 2002; Spracklen et al, 2006). Challenging and changing mindsets at the most senior organisational tiers is crucial in furthering the agenda on racial equality. Future research which examines and highlights the attitudes and thought processes of senior governance figures in relation to issues of diversity, equality and anti-racisms in the sport is vital.

Finally, this research has illustrated the potential efficacy of positive action as a redistributive mechanism to challenge racial inequity. There are a number of other sports (and areas of industry) in Britain which display similar, if not more pronounced, levels of BAME underrepresentation at the coaching and leadership levels. Such sports may exhibit different organisational and operational structures to men’s professional football in England, however positive action refers to a spectrum of potential measures, and can be tailored to particular settings (Noon, 2007; Verbos and Humphries, 2014). Future research, perhaps in collaboration with sports organisations and authorities could examine how positive action measures might be tailored to instances of
inequity and exclusion in other sport coaching and governance contexts. The fact that the EFL adapted this measure from the NFL in North America demonstrates the transferability of positive action measures. It is up to academia and the sports industry to collaborate to ensure the potential redistributive impacts of positive action measures do not continue to go underutilised in the fight against racial exclusion and inequity. This must be a holistic approach which involves relevant stakeholders within affirmative and positive action, with BAME groups at the heart of discussions.
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Appendices
Appendix 1: Survey Participant information sheet

What is the purpose of the study?

The study is designed to find out about coach recruitment practices at club academies in men’s professional football in England. In particular, the study will examine the extent and ways in which professional football club academies have implemented the new English Football League (EFL) mandatory code of recruitment; a measure designed to increase the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) coaches in the game.

Who is doing this research and why?

This study forms part of a PhD presently being undertaken at Loughborough University examining the levels of representation and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic coaches in men’s professional football in England. The PhD also aims to examine ‘good practice’ measures designed to address the under-representation of BAME coaches in male English professional football. The main investigator for this study is Dom Conricode, a PhD student at Loughborough University. The project is being supervised by Dr. Steven Bradbury, whose details and past and current research can be found by following this link: http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ssehs/staff/steven-bradbury/

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes. Upon receiving this email, if after you have read this information you have any questions please contact the main investigator who will be happy to discuss any queries you have. If you are happy to proceed with undertaking the survey, you will be asked at the beginning of the survey to give your consent to take part, however if at any time, before, during or after the completion of the survey you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

What will I be asked to do and how long will it take?

Fill in an online survey which will ask you some questions about recruitment practices at your club’s academy. It will only take around 10 minutes of your time.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. Data will be anonymised and the main investigator will be the only individual with access to the data. Data will also be password protected and stored in accordance with Loughborough University’s strict code of ethics.

What will happen to the results of the study?
The anonymised results of the study will be published in a final PhD thesis in October 2018.

**What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?**

If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact Ms Jackie Green, the Secretary for the University's Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub Committee: Ms J Green, Research Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222423.
Email: J.A.Green@lboro.ac.uk

The University also has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice/](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice/).

**I have some more questions; who should I contact?**

Dom Conricode, National Centre of Sport and Exercise Medicine, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 STT
Email: D.conricode@lboro.ac.uk
Appendix 2: Survey Informed consent form

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

Taking Part

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee.

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study, have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

I agree to take part in this study.

Use of Information

I understand that all the personal information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others or for audit by regulatory authorities.

I understand that anonymised quotes may be used in the final PhD thesis

I agree for the data I provide to be securely archived at the end of the project.

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to Dom Conricode.

Name of participant [printed] Signature Date

Researcher [printed] Signature Date
Appendices

Appendix 3: Interview Participant Information Sheet

What is the purpose of the study?

The study is designed to examine perceptions around the responses to low levels of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) coaches in men’s English professional football. In particular, the study will examine the extent and ways in which professional football clubs have implemented the new English Football League (EFL) mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment.

Who is doing this research and why?

This study forms part of a PhD examining ‘good practice’ measures designed to address the under-representation of BAME coaches in male English professional football.

The main investigator for this study is Dom Conricode, a PhD student at Loughborough University. The project is being supervised by Dr. Steven Bradbury.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes. After you have read this information and asked any questions I will ask you to complete an informed consent form. However, if at any time you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

What will I be asked to do and how long will it take?

Take part in an interview which will ask you some questions about measures recently introduced in the game intended to address the low levels of BAME coaches. It will only take around 30 minutes of your time.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. Data will be anonymised and the main investigator will be the only individual with access to the data. Data will also be password protected and stored in accordance with Loughborough University’s strict code of ethics.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The anonymised results of the study will be published in a final PhD thesis in October 2018.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?
If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact Ms Jackie Green, the Secretary for the University’s Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub Committee: Ms J Green, Research Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222423.
Email: J.A.Green@lboro.ac.uk

The University also has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice/.

I have some more questions; who should I contact?

Dom Conricode, National Centre of Sport and Exercise Medicine, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 STT
Email: D.conricode@lboro.ac.uk
Appendices

Appendix 4: Interview informed consent form

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

Taking Part

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee.

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study, have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

I agree to take part in this study.

Use of Information

I understand that all the personal information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others or for audit by regulatory authorities.

I understand that anonymised quotes may be used in the final PhD thesis

I agree for the data I provide to be securely archived at the end of the project.

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to Dom Conricode.

Name of participant  [printed]  Signature  Date

Researcher  [printed]  Signature  Date