Game changer or empty promise? An examination of the English Football League mandatory code of coach recruitment

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GAME CHANGER OR EMPTY PROMISE?
An examination of the English Football League mandatory code of coach recruitment

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Introduction

• Outline:
  • Research background
  • Research focus
  • Survey findings
  • Qualitative findings
  • Critical race theoretical analysis
Research background

Historic and continuing underrepresentation of BAME coaches in men's English professional football

Bradbury, 2016

BAME REPRESENTATION IN UK SOCIETY AND MEN’S ENGLISH PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL (2016)
Research focus

- Recent development of positive action initiatives designed to address this underrepresentation
- Highest-profile measure = English Football League’s mandatory and voluntary codes of recruitment
- Focus upon key areas of recruitment process

- Online surveys with;
  - Club academy managers (n=23)

- Semi-structured interviews with;
  - Club academy managers (n=10)
Survey findings

Applications
• 10% of applications BAME

Interviews
• 27% of interviews awarded to BAME applicants
• 98% of BAME applicants awarded an interview

Appointments
• 30% of jobs awarded to BAME applicants
• 58% of BAME applicants appointed to coaching positions
Qualitative findings

**Recognition**

- ‘So what may have happened in the past… You speak to the people within, do we know anybody who may be interested in a part-time coaching position, So let’s say it was someone like myself… and I’m not from a BAME background, so I’m White and it might be that, you know, most of my contacts are also White’ (Academy manager, League One club)

- ‘I think any scheme that almost sort of especially enforces for you to consider the process has got to be good’ (Academy manager, League Two club)

**Denial**

- “You look round and think there’s not really no need at (second tier club)” (Academy manager, Championship club)

- ‘The process, and how we ran the process was exactly the same’ (Academy manager, Championship club)

- ‘The best people get the jobs no matter they’re Black, White or excuse me for saying this, green’ (Academy manager, League Two club)
Critical race theoretical analysis

Colour-blindness and meritocracy

• 'Inequity, inopportunity and oppression are historical artefacts that will not be easily remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society' (DeCuir and Dixon, 2004, p. 29)

• ‘Numerical representation of Black participants and coaches does not represent a genuine and meaningful organizational culture that respects and promotes equality and diversity values’ (Rankin-Wright et al, 2016, p.365)

• Denial of the salience of ‘race’ in coach recruitment practices

• Colour-blind and meritocratic ideals deny both the impact of ‘race’ and the efficacy of equality initiatives designed to address this impact

❖ To fully realise the potential of positive action in coach recruitment a shift is required in the thinking of those implementing schemes on the ground…
Thank you!

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