1 **Investigating the alignment between coaches' ideological beliefs and academy**

2 **philosophy in professional youth football**

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11

Abstract

The impacts of professional sporting culture and institutional discourse on coaching practices and ideologies have largely been unconsidered and undiscussed. Understanding coaching practice from a social perspective can provide insights into the prevailing culture that coaches are immersed within, pointing to patterns of discourse, norms and values that govern coaches' actions. The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential for (mis)alignment between coaches' ideological beliefs and the instituted philosophy of the professional football academy at which they worked. Thirteen male football coaches (M = 36.23 years) were observed coaching on three separate occasions, equating to 2584 minutes of footage (M = 66.26 minutes). Each recorded session was analysed using a computerised version of the Coach Analysis Intervention System (CAIS). All participants were interviewed twice (before first observation and after final observation). Coaches were questioned about the academy philosophy and their personal behavioural profiles. Data were subjected to thematic analysis and placed within a theoretical framework utilising concepts of Pierre Bourdieu. Findings highlighted that coaches' interpretations of the academy philosophy were impacted by their prior socialisation and position within the status hierarchy. The data also demonstrated 'philosophy' being used as a 'buzzword' throughout the academy, derived from loose interpretations, but offered few specific suggestions regarding how coaches 'should' behave. Coach interactions were used as forms of social control rather than addressing pedagogical concerns, with coaches' personal dispositions proving extremely strong and ultimately prevailing. It is worth questioning, therefore, the extent to which the academy 'philosophy' can be displaced, and the mechanisms required to ensure collective acceptance to an instituted coaching approach.

Keywords: sports coaching, coaching philosophy, coach behaviour, ideology, Bourdieu

Introduction

Scholars have suggested that coaching research is starved of the contextual considerations and discursive practices comprising the coaching role (e.g., Jones, Potrac, Cushion, & Ronglan, 2010; Jones, Edwards, & Filho, 2014). This is particularly the case in elite developmental sport contexts, such as football academies, where coaches are central figures in athletes' developmental trajectories and considered as 'gatekeepers' of knowledge (Cushion & Jones, 2006). In this context, evidence shows that coaching encompasses periods of initiation and socialisation (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2006), forming a micro-political network (e.g. Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002) that provides a framework for social exchange governing coaching practice. The effect of this is that coaches' knowledge, behaviour, and practices are conditioned (but not limited) by cultural traditions, orthodox beliefs and hierarchical relationships (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2012) within coaching sub-cultures. As individual coaches' practices form part of wider social and cultural arrangements (Potrac et al., 2002), individual activities are contextually-bound to achieve collective goals (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Thus, understanding coaches' behaviour from a social perspective provides hidden insight into the prevailing culture that coaches are immersed within, pointing to patterns of discourse, norms and values that govern coaches' actions. By investigating coaching behaviour from a social perspective, we are better placed to highlight transmission and actualisation within coaches' practices, providing a level of critical analysis and comparative insight.

The behaviours coaches employ are heavily informed by the conventions and traditions inherent in their coaching culture (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). Exposure to this culture typically involves a process of first observing and receiving coaching as athletes, then as novice or assistant coaches, before becoming head coaches themselves (Cushion et al., 2003). Over time, personal beliefs *about* coaching form deep-rooted theories *of* coaching (cf. Argyris & Schön, 1974), reflective of ideological principles and rhetoric forming the basis for coaching

62 methodology (Cushion & Partington, 2016). These 'folk pedagogies' become established and
63 govern coaching practice, and despite attempts from coach education to bring the process of
64 socialisation under greater control, coaching can be conceptualised as an ideologically
65 determined practice. In other words, coach behaviour is as a result of his or her underlying
66 belief system (cf. Pajares, 1992) resulting from exposure to the collective social consciousness
67 and accompanying cultural discourse. In coaching, this often results in a reproduction of
68 'accepted' practices (Cushion et al., 2003), which 'mimic' those that went before.

69 Despite previous mixed-method studies providing an enhanced understanding of
70 coaches and their practices (e.g., Harvey, Cushion, Cope & Muir, 2013), from a critical
71 sociological perspective much of this work has been, arguably, descriptive and reductionist in
72 nature, viewing coaching as a linear process through applying models of best practice (Jones
73 et al., 2014). Essentially, understanding coaches' behaviour as a form of ideological expression
74 enables deeper insight into how the nature of the activity (i.e., social, cultural, historical) affects
75 coaching practice (Cushion & Partington, 2016), rather than simply documenting behaviour as
76 a systemic chain of propositions that equate to a coherent and calculated system of 'common-
77 sense' pedagogic activity (Jones et al., 2014). Such insight invites the possibility for learning
78 and change through exposing the internalised structures and schemes of perception that
79 influence coaching practice (cf. Bourdieu, 1977).

80 Our purpose, therefore, was to build on the existing critical sociological research into
81 coaching to provide insight into the mechanisms underpinning the transmission and reception
82 of an instituted coaching philosophy within a coaching academy, an area popular for discussion
83 within coach learning and practice. In using Bourdieu's theoretical architecture, we are better
84 able to make sense of the (mis)alignment or disjuncture between the instituted academy
85 philosophy, and coaches' ideological beliefs.

86 **Theoretical framework**

A significant body of research has drawn upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu to provide insight into the social mechanisms that regulate coaching. These mechanisms include the unequal distribution of power across coaching practice, highlighting the symbolic violence built into the interactions between coaches and athletes (e.g. Cushion and Jones, 2006, 2012) as well as the patterns of socialisation that frame coaches' learning (e.g. Cushion *et al.,* 2003; Harvey, Cushion and Massa-Gonzalez, 2010; Hassanin and Light, 2014). Further research has explored the interplay of power and culture within formal coach education systems (e.g. Townsend and Cushion, 2017; Cushion, Griffiths, & Armour, 2019) and in coach mentoring (e.g. Leeder & Cushion, 2019; Sawiuk, Taylor, & Groom, 2018). Taken together, this body of research suggests coaching has a tendency towards social and cultural reproduction, that is, the reproduction of existing and dominant discourses, practices and knowledge. In thinking with Bourdieu, we are able to place coaches' practice into a wider framework of social structure, exposing the social origin of coaches' actions, discourses and behaviours and highlighting the mechanisms that contribute to cultural reproduction in coaching (cf. Bourdieu, 1989). Exploring contrasting fields of practice within coaching is important to expose the various forces at work in socialising coaches. In exposing these regularities across fields with different sets of structured social relations we are better placed to move away from reproduction and towards transformation.

Bourdieu utilised the concept of fields and the analogy of the 'game' to illustrate the behaviours and relationships of social actors. Fields have recognisable social boundaries, and represents a social space in which there are collections of structured social positions. Each field contains a particular social 'game', for which its actors develop a 'feel' for, engaging in regular and predictable practices to accumulate various forms of capital, thus (re)producing socialisation processes and collective ways of thinking and doing (Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu's concept of field is useful for understanding the set of logics

112 that structure institutions and the activities within them (Bourdieu, 1990a). In this context, the
113 field of coaching includes such things as: sport-specific governing body policies, procedural
114 directives (understood as club playing directives) and coach education; the knowledge and
115 expertise of a range of social actors, and, the organisational structures and hierarchies in place
116 within particular coaching contexts. Together, these provide a social framework for sets of
117 orthodox practices and norms that coaching follows.

118 To understand one's position within a social system, habitus represents durable and
119 transposable patterns of behaviour and dispositions which, is both structured by and structures
120 individual actions (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus is a conceptual tool
121 for understanding internalised social structures that are manifested in ways of being, actions,
122 language and behaviour. Habitus encompasses orienting dispositions, providing individuals in
123 the same objective conditions with a shared or similar worldview. Fields, such as a football
124 academy, act on individual coaches to establish 'how things are done', that is, an invisible
125 reality that governs practice, which Bourdieu terms doxa (Bourdieu, 1977). Where there is
126 doxa, there is symbolic violence, which exists when doxa produces or sustains an unequal
127 distribution of capital (Everett, 2002) that is accepted and normalised by individuals. In
128 coaching fields, the logic of practice orients coaches towards a singular purpose, ensuring
129 collective acceptance. The degree to which individual actors are taken 'in and by the game' is
130 referred to as illusio (Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Following the 'rules' of
131 the game can evoke potential benefits, with this being measured by alignment between habitus
132 and the field in question (Bourdieu, 1990a). Social positioning, then, is dependent on the power
133 of habitus in the field to which it is attuned.

134 Furthermore, Bourdieu's concept of capital governs the position individuals occupy
135 within a social space (Bourdieu, 1989). According to Bourdieu, the level of capital afforded to
136 an individual represents the material and symbolic resources available to them based on their

137 current position or prior history in a given field. Within coaching, coaches harbour varying
138 levels of capital, applicable to and impacting upon their social hierarchy, which includes
139 cultural (coaching qualifications), social (position within a club), and physical (attributes and
140 abilities). Symbolic capital refers to the recognition of a species of capital as highly valued,
141 providing benefits and advantages for that individual within a particular field (Bourdieu and
142 Wacquant, 1992). Individuals are continuously seeking to elevate their social positioning
143 (Bourdieu, 1990a), thus the concept of capital elicits notions of relative advantage and power
144 distribution. For example, social capital is associated with status, professional relationships,
145 experience and reputation within coaching, and varying extents of social capital can be accrued
146 according to biography, and knowledge and understanding of coaching. Whereas, symbolic
147 capital relates to the perception of other forms of capital when transformed by an individual in
148 a position of authority (Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, capital has a
149 powerful influence on 'what' can be learned in coaching.

150 In this research we use Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital to help
151 understand coaching as a social practice and investigate the potential for (mis)alignment
152 between coaches' ideological beliefs and the academy's philosophy, alongside a set of
153 secondary explanatory concepts such as doxa, illusio, and symbolic violence, which have rarely
154 been used in coaching research. More specifically, the framework offered a set of 'thinking
155 tools' (Bourdieu, 1989) to illuminate social positions when conceptualising the logics of
156 practice, structure-agency dialectic and field disjuncture or acceptance, visible from the
157 methods employed. Indeed, the use of mixed-methods, as supported by Bourdieu himself
158 (Bourdieu, 1984) adds an additional dimension to this study, as much of the previous work
159 drawing upon Bourdieu has been limited to single methodologies. Therefore, the use of
160 observations alongside interviews offers a further contribution to the wider coaching literature.

Methodology

Paradigmatic perspective

This research is guided by the key principles of critical theory. Thus, the relationships of power in social practice are considered with the shared nature of reality and of knowledge (Creswell, 2013). From an ontological and epistemological perspective, social practice is fundamentally mediated by power relations; these are both social in nature and historically constituted (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). The issues of power, domination, and oppression are central to critical theory, and in highlighting who has power, who does not, and why (Kincheloe *et al.,* 2011) within a social system. More specifically, research within a critical tradition generally accepts theory as a form of social or cultural criticism, with certain groups being privileged over others; the oppression that characterizes this is reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

Research design

This season-long study involved a single site investigation of the academy within a professional football club from the north of England. The case study method was considered appropriate in enabling an in-depth investigation into coaches' behaviour in reference to the academy's coaching philosophy (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006). The purpose was to gain context-dependent knowledge of one site, with previous research suggesting such knowledge and expertise are central tenets of the case study as a research method (Flyvbjerg, 2006). While this study captures the coaching processes of only one professional academy, readers can interpret these findings through the lens of their own practice and context (Smith, 2018).

[Insert Table 1 Here]

Participants and context

Professional football clubs are highly-stratified and notoriously difficult to access (Cushion &

186 Jones, 2012). The club under study had an existing relationship with the authors with desire to
187 extend this to coaching. Therefore, prior to the start of the season, the second author met the
188 Head of Academy Coaching and Academy Manager to discuss areas where coaching support
189 could be provided. From these discussions it emerged that the head of coaching and academy
190 manager wanted to understand more about the coaching behaviour of their staff. The role of
191 the second author was to map out a methodology for how coaching behaviour could be
192 investigated and determine how this data could be used to support the coaches' continued
193 learning and development. Once agreed, all coaches were brought together by senior academy
194 staff for an initial meeting to explain the nature of the work. Given this was the first time a
195 study like this had been undertaken at the academy, it was decided that all full-time and part-
196 time academy coaches would be asked to take part. Shortly after starting the study, the
197 Academy Manager and other senior coaching staff both moved positions. One stayed at the
198 club and the other left the club, but neither were able to participate in the study. After
199 institutional ethical approval, thirteen male coaches (M = 36.23 years) agreed to take part in
200 this study. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the participants (see Table
201 1).

202 Since 2011, all English professional football academies are required to fulfil the
203 guidelines of the Premier League's The Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP). The EPPP was
204 in response to calls for more home grown and higher quality English players. As such, the
205 purpose of the EPPP is to "promote excellence, nurture talent and systematically convert this
206 talent into professional players capable of playing first team football at the club that develops
207 them" (The Premier League, 2011, p. 12). Players are scouted, selected and contracted to
208 embark on a three-phase performance pathway (i.e., Foundation, Youth Development,
209 Professional) (see The Premier League, 2011, p.15). In the present study, players of different
210 phases were split across two sites; a main site outdoor facility (Youth Development and

211 Professional) and off-site indoor facility (Foundation). The performance of academies is
212 measured through 10 key performance indicators (i.e., vision and strategy, coaching provision)
213 (see The Premier League, 2011, p.28), with at least the UEFA 'B' Licence being a prerequisite
214 for coaches delivering. Through this independent audit process, academies are categorised
215 across levels 1-4 (see The Premier League, 2011, p.31), with the lower the category status
216 awarded (i.e. level 1) the greater the levels of funding. In the season prior to the study, the
217 academy had attained Category 2 status.

218 *Academy coaching philosophy*

219 A section of the EPPP states "clubs will be encouraged to apply their own specific approaches
220 to performance planning and create their own bespoke player development models" (p.15). The
221 EPPP emphasises that "the board of each club will define its own Football Philosophy as the
222 club's individual "DNA" and then delegate responsibility for the day-to-day delivery of the
223 Football Philosophy at Academy level to the Academy Manager and his/her staff" (p.16). In
224 the academy under study, the senior staff (i.e. Academy Manager, Head of Academy Coaching)
225 developed the coaching philosophy (provided in the bullet points below), which was intended
226 to serve as the framework for how coaches worked with their players:

227 • "Although educating the players to play as part of a team, it is vital that all our
228 players understand the roles and responsibilities they have within the team structure
229 as an individual."
230 • "Coaching will be structured through enjoyable sessions and taught in a number of
231 styles that must enthuse, guide and excite our players."
232 • "Coaching sessions will follow our curriculum although it is vital that our playing
233 philosophy of ball retention is evident throughout the session and not dismissed at
234 the expense of the topic."
235 • "Coach intervention along with instruction is encouraged, however players must
236 learn to make their own decisions and have ownership of their own personal
237 development."

238 The EPPP document suggests an academy should be "able to articulate its own Football
239 Philosophy and demonstrate how it is embedded into the day-to-day running of the Academy
240 and the wider club". Importantly, the philosophy is "measured by the values that the club,
241 staff and players demonstrate through their actions on a day-to-day basis" (p.16) and is thus
242 observable. In this study, the academy's coaching philosophy was shared during pre-season
243 directly with full-time coaches during face-to-face staff meetings and less directly with part-
244 time coaches through a printed curriculum handbook.

245 ***Procedure***

246 Single research methods (i.e. observations only) do not provide sufficient coverage of the
247 coaching role (Potrac et al., 2002), offering no more than a descriptive analysis (Cope,
248 Partington, & Harvey, 2017). In response to this, a mixed-method approach has been
249 welcomed in the coaching literature, as the data generated shows an appreciation of what
250 coaches do and their interpretations of this (Harvey et al., 2013). In short, accompanying
251 systematic observation data provided insights into coaching practices and questioning the
252 coaches (i.e. interpretive interviews) against these behaviours uncovered subjective reasons
253 for them (Cushion et al., 2003). A mixed method approach fits with the paradigmatic
254 assumptions of critical theory as interviews were able to reveal something of the history and
255 discursive construction of coaches' practices, whereas observational data provided insight
256 into shared patterns of behaviour, disposition and interaction; that is, their *practical*
257 *knowledge* (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). Together, this provided a basis for ideology critique.

258 *Systematic observation*

259 A systematic observation method has often been employed to identify the behaviours coaches
260 use in practice (Cope et al., 2017). In this study, each coach was observed coaching on three
261 separate occasions, resulting in 39 sessions being recorded in total. This equated to 2,584
262 minutes of footage (M = 66.26 minutes per session). On a monthly basis, the Head of

263 Academy Coaching created a timetable of the observation schedule, which was sent via email
264 to the researcher and all coaches. Each session was filmed using a digital video camera
265 placed on a stationary tripod. Observations took place at two sites; an indoor arena (from a
266 vantage point) and outdoor pitches (from a touchline). Each observed coach fitted a
267 Bluetooth microphone. Each recorded session was analysed using a computerised version of
268 the Coach Analysis Intervention System (CAIS; Cushion, Harvey, Muir, & Nelson, 2012).
269 This particular system was used for a number of reasons, which were: a) that this system was
270 the most recently validated systematic observation instrument in coaching, b) the research
271 team being familiar with and trained in using the system, and c) its usage and therefore
272 appropriateness for use with football coaches. Inter and intra observer reliability checks were
273 performed on 15% of all data that was systematically coded, with the recommended 85%
274 reliability threshold achieved (Cope et al., 2017).

275 *Interpretive interviews*

276 A semi-structured interview is a useful research method to help uncover personal
277 interpretations of social situations (Nelson, Groom, & Potrac, 2014; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).
278 To accompany field notes and observations, coaches engaged in semi-structured interviews at
279 two separate time points; the first occurring at the start of the season (across six weeks) and
280 the second taking place after the third observation (across four weeks). This was dependent
281 on coach availability. Within the first interview coaches were encouraged to detail their
282 previous athletic careers and early coaching experiences to enable us to interpret how this
283 may have impacted their coaching behaviour. They were also asked to provide us their
284 understanding of what they perceived to be the academy coaching philosophy.

285 After each coach had been observed three times, coaches were invited to take part in a
286 second interview, which was based on their systematic observation data shared with them
287 throughout the season. During this interview, coaches were encouraged to discuss their

288 thoughts on their behavioural profile linked to the academy's philosophy. In this way, it offered
289 participants a chance to also reflect on the research process (Smith & McGannon, 2018) and
290 enabled us to consider further interpretation of the academy philosophy. All interviews took
291 place at the main academy site and were transcribed verbatim.

292 ***Data analysis***

293 For the purpose of this study, the systematic observation data offered a reliable means of
294 identifying actual coaches' behaviours (Cope et al., 2017), while the CAIS offered an
295 established instrument in line with validation procedures (see Brewer & Jones, 2002). Analysis
296 of the CAIS data took place on a descriptive level (Partington, Cushion, Cope, & Harvey,
297 2015). For example, this related to the frequency of coaches' primary (i.e. type) and secondary
298 behaviours (i.e. timing and recipient) coded in line with operational definitions (see Cushion
299 et al., 2012). Percentages were calculated by the following equation: frequency of individual
300 behaviours divided by the total number of all coaching behaviours (Lacy & Darst, 1989). The
301 quantitative data generated formed the basis of additional interpretive methodologies (i.e.
302 interview questions) used to analyse these behaviours further (e.g. Partington & Cushion,
303 2013).

304 Analysis of the qualitative data was two-fold. First, thematic analysis was undertaken,
305 which involved identifying and organizing patterns of meanings systematically across a data
306 set, in relation to answering a particular research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). To ensure
307 data provided an accurate representation of the research question, a 'critical friend' (i.e. co-
308 authors) were used at various stages of the research project (Smith & McGannon, 2018). The
309 first stage involved co-developing the first interview guide, followed by dual attendance at five
310 of the 13 initial interviews. Once data were collected, transcribed and coded following the
311 process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), the first and second authors familiarised
312 themselves with the data (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This was not a systematic guide, however,

313 and was often a reciprocal process to avoid ill management of data (Flyvbjerg, 2006) and
314 identify theoretical concepts within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The development and
315 interpretation of transcripts resulted from researchers challenging each other's 'worldviews'
316 (Nelson et al., 2014; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Such dialogue, for example, discussed the
317 ideology/philosophy argument, alongside the impacts and interplay of agency and structure in
318 elite developmental contexts. This then served as a lens through which to better understand the
319 behavioural data.

320 Therefore, the data analysis followed abductive reasoning, which involved moving
321 back and forth between induction and deduction, converting observations into theories before
322 assessing those theories through action (Morgan, 2007). Again, this was not a singular event
323 and involved many meetings between researchers during the course of data collection (Smith
324 & McGannon, 2018). Despite the potential of exposing conflicting beliefs (Sparkes & Smith,
325 2014), such discussions offered a reflexive approach to data analysis (Smith & McGannon,
326 2018). This iterative process allowed new theory (i.e. Bourdieu) to be identified from the data
327 (Patton, 2015) and positioned within a theoretical framework (see Townsend & Cushion,
328 2017).

329 *Researcher reflexivity*

330 Reflexivity is considered a cornerstone of rigorous, power-conscious coaching research
331 (Townsend & Cushion, 2020). Researcher reflexivity occurred in two ways. The first was
332 during data analysis, as explained in the section above. The second was through an ongoing
333 need to appreciate how data may have been shaped by the presence of the first author and
334 second author during data collection. Through rapport developed with coaches (e.g.
335 discussing mutual football connections), this level of social capital enabled the researcher's
336 presence to become 'accepted' around the academy (Patton, 2015). This resulted in longer

337 conversations being held with coaches before and after coaching sessions, and an increased

338 interest from them regarding what 'was being found'[1].

339 Furthermore, the first author – as a neophyte coaching researcher - faced a number of

340 issues affecting data collection and analysis. However, some of the main issues faced revolved

341 around coach availability and coach resistance (i.e. confusion and reluctance when observing

342 coaches), leaving the researcher questioning both the level of importance attached to the

343 process, and their own position within the hierarchy – or on the peripheries - of the academy.

344 This reflexive point is an important one when considering the openness of coaches to share

345 insights and, in turn, the results obtained (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

346

347 [Insert Table 2 Here]

348 **Results**

349 ***Systematic observation***

350 The behavioural profiles of the coaches in this study were similar to those found in other studies

351 (i.e. Potrac, Jones, & Cushion, 2007; Partington & Cushion, 2013). For example, the most used

352 coaching behaviours were direct management and instruction, although silence was found as

353 the single most employed behaviour for nine of the 13 observed coaches (see Table 2).

354 However, silence was also the coaching behaviour with the largest variance between coaches

355 (*SD* = 9.74%), with this even being the case between coaches of the same age group, i.e. Coach

356 10 (33.27%) and Coach 11 (13.59%). Further variances were discovered between coaches in

357 terms of instruction, i.e. Coach 9 (8.87%) and Coach 11 (20.85%) and silence, i.e. Coach 13

[1] The academy held their own in-house CPD, which at times focused on coaching behaviour. While we were not privy to the design or delivery of these, or the conversations that ensued, it is important to note in the context of this study and why the data may have presented itself in the ways found.

358 (12.96%) and Coach 9 (40.83%). Questioning behaviours were less common and where these
359 did occur, variances were found in coaches' questioning, i.e. 0.99% (Coach 11), 10.83%
360 (Coach 6). The range in coaches' behavioural profiles perhaps demonstrated that there was no
361 clear mechanism for understanding and operationalising the academy's philosophy related to
362 coaches' behaviour. Through the qualitative interviews we were able to explore coaches'
363 reasoning and justification of their behaviours, with three themes being constructed from the
364 interview data: 1) Disseminating the academy 'philosophy', 2) interpretation of the academy
365 'philosophy', 3) impacts of prior socialisation experiences.

366 ***Interpretive interviews***

367 *Disseminating the academy 'philosophy'*

368 The analysis highlighted not only the hierarchical methods of transmission, but epistemological
369 gaps in terms of the academy's perceived philosophy within the EPPP and what was being
370 transmitted. Indeed, it appeared senior coaches' ideological beliefs were being imposed on
371 junior or part-time coaches, with the expectation they align their practices accordingly, rather
372 than something that was co-created with their input: "It was done when I joined...it was put
373 across strongly that's how we want to train the kids and how to play in the matches" (Coach
374 2), "in terms of the coaching language and some of the terms, I'm still getting used to that, but
375 the playing philosophy has definitely been outlined to me" (Coach 1). These ideological beliefs
376 then functioned as academy philosophy, with senior staff members reinforcing its 'top-down'
377 nature:

378 "We have regular meetings...we're involved in the actual process of the audit…me
379 and [Coach 6] work very close with [Academy Manager]...he allows us to have that
380 input…mine and [Coach 6] job is to ensure that filters right down" (Coach 13)
381

382 This was supported further by other full-time coaches, who alluded to their first-hand access
383 during the methods of establishment and communication:

384 "We occasionally have meetings with senior coaches where someone will put on a
385 presentation and then we'll discuss it, it's not really about the presentation, it's more
386 the discussion it starts" (Coach 11)
387
388 "I'm allowed to step out of my goalkeeper frame a little bit…saying my opinions to
389 [Academy Manager]…he accepts and listens…We have good debates about tactics,
390 players, opinions…He's the boss and we go with what he says…but he hears out what
391 we have to say" (Coach 12)
392

393 What was clear was that only full-time coaches seemed to have an ability to shape the
394 academy's philosophy, which then filtered down to part-time coaches. This added a further
395 layer of interpretation, as part-time coaches learned about the academy coaching philosophy
396 through a variety of indirect methods (e.g. observations and discussions) with full-time, senior
397 coaches and receiving feedback on their coaching:

398 "If I've got any questions, the full-time members of staff are happy to answer any
399 questions that I've got…I prefer that to anything that's programmed" (Coach 1)
400
401 "I'm coming to sessions whenever I'm available to observe senior coaches…to be as
402 familiar with the philosophy as possible…[Coach 13] being out there with me, asking
403 questions…to coaches who are more experienced and here full-time" (Coach 5)
404
405 "I've found the opportunities very valuable where the senior staff come down and
406 spend time with us on the pitch during sessions...asking questions…maybe slightly
407 changing things, asking why we've done certain things that way or the other" (Coach
408 7)

409 Given these methods of transmission, it is worth questioning the extent to which the academy's
410 perceived 'philosophy' reflected an ideological intent, that is, it was shaped by senior, full-time
411 coaches reflective of their habitus as opposed to the EPPP. Then, the expectation was for it to
412 be received and interpreted by coaches lower down in the status hierarchy:

413 "It's the topic of our philosophy around everything that we do…what we're delivering
414 is what they want at the top" (Coach 6).
415
416 *Interpretation of the academy 'philosophy'*

Perhaps due to the methods of transmission outlined in the previous section, the data revealed a level of ambiguity in coaches' articulations of the academy philosophy. For example, coaches tended to allude to the *playing* principles of the club, with these interpretations of 'philosophy' relating to the coaches' understanding of how their teams were expected to play, for example "play out from the back" (Coach 2), "attacking football" (Coach 5), "possession-based approach" (Coach 6), "play through the thirds" (Coach 7) were terms used by coaches. It was only when coaches were shown the academy philosophy statements and asked to explain their understanding of these that coaches offered their interpretation of how they were expected to coach players:

> "I coach the under-10's…trying to let them make mistakes, manage mistakes, make decisions...they've gotta make decisions…obviously they still need that technical input too" (Coach 1)

> "I think in this age group it should be more about guided discovery...I don't really wanna give them the answers… 'cos on Saturdays we aren't there to give them the answer" (Coach 7)

> "My primary target is to get players to a level where they can have a career in Football…and create a certain level of performance on a Saturday so they don't lose confidence" (Coach 10)

As these data suggest, the academy philosophy offered few specific suggestions for how coaches 'should' behave, with coaches drawing on 'buzz words' that have become popularised in coaching and highlighted a disjuncture between what was instituted and what was translated among the coaches.

Impacts of prior socialisation experiences

The third theme related to how coaches' prior socialisation experiences served as a filter through which they interpreted the academy's coaching philosophy. In particular, coaches referred to their playing careers (see Table 1) and how these influenced their coaching behaviours, as underlined by one senior coach: "I think a lot has been through my

coaches…who I've worked with or under…the bulk of my knowledge comes from personal experiences" (Coach 10). In the absence of a well-articulated academy coaching philosophy, it seemed coaches 'cherry-picked' aspects of their prior socialisation to make sense of how the academy was asking them to coach (Cushion & Partington, 2016):

> "I've learnt quite a lot from stuff throughout my career…you pick little bits you enjoy and what can be worked on" (Coach 8)
>
> "learning under different managers how to go about things, how to treat players, how not to treat players, how to put on sessions which are simple but effective" (Coach 9)
>
> "I've seen good coaches and bad coaches, hopefully I've picked up some of the good stuff and continue to do that…putting to one side the stuff I think is not so good" (Coach 11)

The above examples indicated that individual experience directly influenced coaches' behaviour, as opposed to the academy philosophy, where experience and history held more weight than instituted 'new' approaches. When questioned on personal ideological beliefs, senior coaches demonstrated a level of both rejection and acceptance when met with the academy's philosophy:

> "I don't have a guideline for it… it's just something I've done for the last 10 years" (Coach 3)
>
> "I was quick to adapt those ideas without any conflict…I didn't sort of fight against them" (Coach 6)

Together, these data highlight the various ways the academy philosophy was received by coaches, highlighting mixed understandings, ambiguity, and a level of interpretation that was heavily influenced by the coaches' experience and backgrounds in the game. The individuality of prior socialisation, current position and its impact on interpreting the academy philosophy

478 were reflected in the transmission process, with part-time coaches speaking of their confusion
479 regarding what was expected of them:

480 "I understand the basic principles of what the club wants, they change what they
481 want…sometimes it's about letting the kids play, making their own
482 decisions…sometimes they want us to be onto them…help them out…the actual words
483 they use…I understand all of that, it's how they actually want it delivering I'm a bit
484 unsure about" (Coach 2)
485

486 **Discussion**

487 The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential for (mis)alignment and disjuncture
488 between coaches' personal ideologies, or theories *of* coaching, and the coaching 'philosophy'
489 espoused by the football academy for which they worked through employing a mixed
490 methodology. Findings from the study suggested coaches had difficulty defining what the
491 academy referred to as their 'philosophy' (Cushion & Partington, 2016; Partington &
492 Campbell, 2020). By extending the work of Cushion and Partington (2016), we view the term
493 coaching 'ideology' as a more accurate means to describe what has almost exclusively been
494 understood as coaching 'philosophy', both by the academy under study and in previous
495 research. Cushion and Partington (2016) argued while coaches identify with the idea of a
496 coaching 'philosophy' it is often not reflective of true 'philosophical' thought. Here, the data
497 suggests that coaches were invested in the concept of a coaching 'philosophy'- illustrating the
498 process of illusio. However, our analysis suggests that academy 'philosophy' instead reflected
499 a social system of beliefs, structures and practices, that is, an ideology, that was to varying
500 extents influential in shaping coaches' knowledge. The academy ideology was embedded in
501 coaches' discourse and, depending on the social position of the coach, open to interpretation
502 and influence. This resulted in the transmission of the ideology through day-to-day
503 communications, observations and the social weight of adhering to 'what the club wants'.

504 Furthermore, the data illustrated how the coaches' accumulation of various forms of
505 capital inhibited their access to and alignment with the club's coaching ideology. For example,
506 due to their position within the status hierarchy, combined with their coaching background (see
507 Table 1) some coaches were able to influence the practices of those coaches perceived to hold
508 less capital (see Theme 1). Previous studies in sports coaching (e.g., Townsend & Cushion,
509 2017) have highlighted how reputation 'in the game' can be a powerful source of symbolic
510 capital, providing some coaches with more influence than others in shaping coaching
511 knowledge. In the present study, the social environment of the coaching academy provided an
512 uncertain terrain for the collective development of habitus, with the ideology functioning as an
513 expression of the senior coaches' collective habitus (Leeder & Cushion, 2019; Sawiuk et al.,
514 2018). The behavioural data support these claims, with senior coaches employing higher
515 percentages of instruction (i.e. Coach 11) and the least time spent silent (i.e. Coach 13) (see
516 Table 2), re-enforcing the top-down nature of the academy ideology being disseminated
517 amongst coaches (see Theme 1). The expression and dissemination of the academy ideology
518 can be understood as a symbolic exchange in which coaches (i.e. Coach 1, 5, 7) who were
519 perceived to hold less social capital (i.e. part-time) became aware of the academy ideology
520 through a submission to order (Bourdieu, 1990a). This was achieved through the exercising of
521 symbolic capital in on and off-field discussions (see Theme 1), during which the holder (i.e.
522 senior coaches) "[has] obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition"
523 (Bourdieu, 1989, p.23). This aligns with previous sports coaching research, in which coach
524 educators have been found to actively impose personal ideologies upon coaches (Cushion et
525 al., 2019), and further reinforces the culture of reproduction that some football academies can
526 perpetuate.
527 The senior coaches were also tasked with duties of defending the field's doxic order,
528 such as implementing the academy ideology (see Theme 1). The aim then was for part-time

529 coaches to reproduce the academy's ideology uncritically and autonomously, internalising the
530 field's doxa subconsciously and reinforcing the very structure that limited their position within
531 the field (Bourdieu, 1990a). Aligning practices accordingly with the doxa were likely to be
532 positively sanctioned, whereas failure to conform to the desired practices may have resulted in
533 rejection and exclusion from the social space (field) that coaches were looking to occupy
534 (Cushion et al., 2003). The transmission of accepted ways to coach and aligning with dominant
535 ideologies is a consistent finding across coaching research, particularly in sites where coaches
536 are hierarchically structured. For example, mentors embody a group habitus to be imposed on
537 and reproduced by mentees in alignment with the field's doxa (e.g. Leeder & Cushion, 2019),
538 with one study reporting coach interactions were used as forms of social control - implementing
539 a rigid institutional agenda - rather than to address pedagogical concerns (Sawiuk et al., 2018).
540 As a result, it can be reasonably argued that the academy's ideology was actually a
541 distillation of senior coaches' ideological beliefs through symbolic violence. Symbolic
542 violence refers to the imposition of meaning on dominated groups, and is secured by collective
543 misrecognition, in which it is wielded invisibly and without the recognition of the receiver
544 (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Previous research in developmental contexts have illustrated
545 how symbolic violence is exerted through coaching practice (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2006,
546 2012). However, this study goes further in suggesting that symbolic violence provided the
547 framework for the development of coaches' knowledge. In this study, symbolic violence
548 performed a pedagogic function (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), imposing collective ideology
549 on the group to ensure adherence by those with pedagogic authority (i.e. the senior coaches).
550 This pedagogic action served as the mechanism for the daily (re)production of
551 practices, where the junior coaches were disposed from the outset "to recognise the legitimacy
552 of the information transmitted" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p. 21) from the senior coaches
553 and thus internalised these messages. In so doing, taken-for-granted, that is, doxic principles

554 about ‘how to coach’ and expected behaviours were embedded in the social environment of the
555 academy. In their accumulation and exercising of symbolic capital the senior coaches (i.e.
556 Coach 13) were viewed as ‘gatekeepers’ of knowledge and central to other coaches’ (i.e. Coach
557 5) future success at the academy due to ‘status’ acquired during prior and ongoing socialisation
558 in the ‘game’ (see Theme 1).

559 Furthermore, the study illustrates the processes by which an instituted coaching
560 ideology interacts with, and is permeable to, the structure of the field and habitus. Despite
561 suggestions during interviews on the impact of prior socialisation, the behavioural data
562 demonstrated a level of acceptance consensus regarding how junior coaches’ practices were
563 based on or impacted by senior coaches’ ideological beliefs (i.e. Coach 13; see Table 2). A
564 fundamental socialisation process for coaches is their experiences as players (Cushion et al.
565 2003), as it is during this time coaches develop a sense of what it is to ‘be’ a coach (see Theme
566 3). Indeed, habitus has been suggested to perpetuate itself into the future by previous exposure
567 in similarly structured practices (Bourdieu, 1990a), for example coaches (i.e. Coach 13)
568 aligning the practices they deliver with the coaching they have received. This perpetuation of
569 personal dispositions has been reported in previous sports coaching studies in the practices of
570 football coaches who work in elite youth contexts (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2012) and coach
571 educators who support these coaches (Cushion et al., 2019). In this study, it was senior coaches’
572 ideologies that had become ingrained according to the conditions inscribed in their habitus. As
573 such, the academy philosophy became a form of ideology entrenched – to varying degrees -
574 into the more junior coaches through immersion in the coaching culture.

575 Together, the analysis illustrates a disjuncture between the demands of the field, and
576 coaches’ embodied dispositions towards ‘good’ coaching, which Bourdieu (1990a) describes
577 as hysteresis. Coaching ideologies are rarely imposed uniformly, and the data from junior
578 coaches demonstrated an outward resistance to change (Bourdieu, 1977). The academy,

579 therefore, was a site in which networks of power were crucial in shaping junior coaches'
580 actions. For example, coaches seemed to attach value to others' (i.e. Coach 13, Theme 1) or
581 personal (i.e. Coach 11, Theme 3) professional playing experience, thus positioning learning
582 from more experienced coaches as the primary source of coaching knowledge and limiting the
583 potential or capacity for instituted coaching ideologies to influence change.

584 As such, the data illustrated a trend of continuity rather than change which closely
585 resembles models of cultural reproduction observed in previous coaching research (Townsend
586 & Cushion, 2017), where received wisdom and tradition are culturally-valued. However, this
587 study goes further in highlighting the social mechanisms that sustain models of cultural
588 reproduction in coaching, and in particular the power of senior coaches in shaping how coaches
589 should act within an academy system.

590 The field's doxa (i.e. academy ideology) was comprised of common-sense, tacit ideals
591 to sustain and legitimise practices. However, in this study, senior coaches did not outwardly
592 express any consequences for misalignments, suggesting that the academy imposed a (weak)
593 form of symbolic violence that performed a pedagogic function, that is, providing a framework
594 for coaches to 'learn' the correct way of coaching. In other words, this was more of a 'felt'
595 coercion by senior coaches, as opposed to an explicit 'you must do this'. Such was the influence
596 of habitus that the academy 'philosophy' was continually subject to interpretation (see Theme
597 2), with senior coaches' personal dispositions acting as a 'filter' (see Theme 3) which proved
598 strong and ultimately prevailing. It is worth questioning, therefore, the extent to which the
599 academy ideology can be displaced, and the mechanisms required to ensure collective
600 acceptance to an instituted coaching approach.

601 **Conclusion and Implications**

602 This study extended previous research by identifying how an academy football club's coaching
603 'philosophy' was understood, interpreted and practiced by the academy's coaches. The analysis

604 overwhelmingly demonstrates that what was instituted by the academy as a coaching
605 'philosophy' instead resembled ideology. According to the volume of type and capital held,
606 coaches shaped and distilled the academy ideology according to their own personal
607 preferences, and communicated the ideology to other members of the academy through day-
608 to-day language and practice. As such, coaches' knowledge and behaviour represented an
609 accumulation of social history, convention and ideology, where one's position in the social
610 hierarchy determined the level of autonomy and influence over 'how to coach'. These findings
611 raise serious questions about the extent to which coaches are supported to apply instituted
612 coaching philosophies in practice, and we support calls made from coaching scholars (i.e.
613 Cushion & Partington, 2016) for coaching philosophy to be repositioned as part of formal
614 coach education as more than a list of statements that describe coaches' intentions for practice.
615 Formal coach education needs to help coaches think philosophically by asking questions of
616 them that enables the exploration of their axiological and ethical values, and ontological and
617 epistemological beliefs (see Partington & Campbell, 2020). Coaches should then be challenged
618 to identify where these philosophies exist in practice and how they know this is so. In this way
619 then, coaching philosophy and coaching practice becomes an iterative process of moving back
620 and forth between the two in the quest for greater alignment.

621 A responsibility in bringing greater conceptual clarity also lie at the local, club level,
622 as ultimately, this is where coaching philosophy is enacted. Clubs could do this by providing
623 forums where coaches' individual beliefs, biases and assumptions are recognised, shared and
624 positively challenged without judgement made regarding 'best' practices. Such an approach
625 would also help coaches to reflect critically on the judgements and values which form the basis
626 for beliefs about coaching practice. However, we appreciate this is a challenging task requiring
627 the redistribution of power between senior academy coaches, often as the gatekeepers of
628 working practices, and other coaches. This means coaches with more perceived capital engage

with coaches through dialogue where individual coaches' voices are listened, respected, and then responded to through the development of a co-constructed club coaching philosophy (Cope, Cushion, Harvey & Partington, 2020). Likewise, we as researchers could contribute in catering future studies to counteract the previous shortcomings of systematic observation research. That is, for example, integrating coach interventions to facilitate field change. We accept that such a repositioning of the field is far from straightforward, given academy football clubs are a breeding ground for unequal power relations (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2012). Nonetheless, the integration of more equitable practices seems necessary if there is to be a greater alignment between club 'philosophy' and individual coaches' ideologies.

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748 **Table 1. Participant demographics.**

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Coach	Age	Coaching Experience	Phase	Years at club	Employment	Coaching Qualifications
Coach 1	23	5 years	Foundation	1 year	Part-time	UEFA ‘B’ Licence, FA Youth Module 2
Coach 2	24	5 years	Foundation	2 years	Part-time	UEFA ‘B’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3, Sports Coaching degree
Coach 3	45	7 years	FP GK Coach	2 years	Part-time	UEFA ‘B’ Licence GK, FA Level 2, FA Youth Module 2
Coach 4	40	18 years	Lead FP Coach	15 years	Full-time	UEFA ‘B’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3, Advanced FA Youth Award
Coach 5	28	7 years	Youth Development	4 years	Part-time	UEFA ‘B’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3
Coach 6	31	8 years	Youth Development	6 years	Full-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3, Physical Education degree, PGCE
Coach 7	51	20 years	Youth Development	2 years	Part-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3, FA Level 2 Course Tutor
Coach 8	42	22 years	YDP GK Coach	5 years	Part-time	UEFA ‘B’ Licence GK, FA Youth Module 3, Ex-professional GK
Coach 9	44	11 years	Under 14’s/Lead YDP Coach	4 years	Full-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence (undertaking UEFA Pro Licence), Youth Module 3, Ex-professional
Coach 10	31	14 years	Professional Development	8 years	Full-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3
Coach 11	39	3 years	Professional Development	1 year	Full-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence, FA Youth Module 3, Ex-professional
Coach 12	36	9 years	Lead/PDP GK Coach	2 years	Full-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence GK, Ex-professional GK
Coach 13	37	10 years	Head of Academy Coaching	9 years	Full-time	UEFA ‘A’ Licence, FA Advanced Youth Award

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Table 2. Primary Coaching Behaviours

Behaviour	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6	Coach 7	Coach 8	Coach 9	Coach 10	Coach 11	Coach 12	Coach 13
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Physical Assistance	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Postive Modelling	2.78	1.92	2.78	2.72	2.93	0.57	0.46	3.55	1.58	0.64	3.10	2.33	2.17
Negative Modelling	0.25	0.32	1.22	0.53	0.61	1.08	0.08	1.41	0.41	0.06	0.77	1.00	0.26
Instruction	14.18	14.88	15.22	11.92	12.13	9.50	13.40	12.06	8.87	17.91	20.85	11.93	19.39
General feedback (+)	7.34	5.52	10.39	10.86	7.48	8.67	11.41	11.60	9.35	9.56	15.77	19.47	12.17
General feedback (-)	0.20	1.54	1.17	0.53	0.66	0.64	0.77	1.27	0.14	1.15	1.27	1.87	0.78
Specific feedback (+)	5.95	7.25	12.33	4.97	6.20	8.03	5.67	7.51	2.54	3.00	8.87	13.87	4.09
Specific feedback (-)	1.14	2.76	3.83	1.72	3.16	3.51	2.45	3.23	1.44	3.12	2.75	3.13	2.17
Corrective feedback	3.87	5.07	5.78	6.29	4.98	4.97	3.83	4.91	3.37	4.02	6.20	5.47	4.35
Management Direct	17.15	15.97	19.50	17.95	18.66	19.18	15.16	13.88	18.08	17.85	16.41	16.47	25.48
Management Indirect	3.52	2.63	5.72	5.23	4.15	3.44	2.76	4.82	3.23	4.53	2.54	2.60	2.26
Management Criticism	0.20	0.13	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00
Question	2.48	2.82	4.67	9.47	5.15	10.83	5.36	1.36	4.88	1.08	0.99	3.13	4.26
Response to Question	3.22	3.72	3.33	3.31	2.99	3.19	2.53	3.14	3.23	1.02	1.27	1.80	3.22
Silence	36.69	33.74	13.11	18.48	27.85	19.44	31.70	30.21	40.48	33.27	13.59	13.13	12.96
Praise	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.25	0.00	0.00
Humour	0.00	0.00	0.78	3.11	0.55	1.53	1.30	0.36	1.79	0.00	2.18	1.27	2.26
Hustle	0.99	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.28	0.13	0.00	0.27	0.00	1.40	0.07	1.27	0.17
Scold	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00
Confer with Assistant	0.00	1.73	0.00	2.78	2.21	4.91	3.14	0.32	0.62	1.27	1.13	1.20	4.00
Uncodable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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