Sport Coaching and the Inclusion of Black Women in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

In the UK, current statistics and research suggests that diversity within sport and sports leadership remains low. This trend is apparent despite a wider drive and legislative push for sport organisations and national governing bodies (NGBs) to increase and diversify their participant base and sport coaching workforce. In particular, there is an under-representation of Black and minoritised ethnic (BME)[1] groups in all leadership positions across multiple sports. Within this, and providing the focus of this chapter, is the acute invisibility of Black[2] women as sport coaches. This chapter (re)presents the voices of eight Black women coaches, interviewed about their professional and personal experiences of coaching across a range of sports. Rooted in a Critical Race Theory and Black feminist theoretical framework, we discuss the coaches' narratives under three themes: feeling hyper visible, overcoming the burden of doubt, and everyday experiences of sexism. Foregrounding the experiences and counter narratives of Black women coaches highlights the practices that reinforce the dominance of both whiteness and masculinity within sport coaching. The coaches' narratives demonstrate the need for greater knowledge and understanding of the intersectional structural and relational experiences that facilitate, as well as constrain, Black women coaches' progression in certain sports.

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[1] BME (Black and Minoritised Ethnic) is a popular acronym used in policy circles in the UK, used to denote the diverse positions and identities of all those individuals classed as 'in the minority'. In this chapter, we use the term 'Black' as an inclusive and political term.

[2] Whilst acknowledging critiques of the term 'Black', and recognising the multiplicity of experiences within and across different groups of people, we adopt Black as an inclusive, theoretical and political term to refer to the experiences of a wide-ranging group of racial and ethnic minority women.

Introduction

Equality and diversity issues feature strongly in the strategies and activities of the United Kingdom (UK) (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) sport and coaching agencies in response to wider societal drives and legislative pushes to address social inequalities. Through the recent UK Equality Act (2010), sports organisations need to demonstrate their commitment to improving diversity within their workforce and the services that they offer. For instance, the UK Coaching Framework advocates 'a more diverse [coaching] workforce' as one of its central strategic objectives (sports coach UK, 2012). In terms of addressing either gender and/or race more directly, this usually includes increasing the number of women as participants and coaches on the one hand, and the drive amongst coaches to recruit and include BME groups in their professional practice on the other. Notably, the representation of BME men or women as leaders and coaches is largely missing from such policy agendas. Despite broad calls for equity amongst UK sport organisations and national governing bodies (NGBs), existing statistics and research continues to suggest that diversity within sport, especially in positions of leadership, remain low. This is evidenced by the under-representation of minoritised ethnic groups in all leadership positions[3].

The under-representation of Black coaches, and particularly Black women coaches, in the UK sport coaching context has been prominently highlighted by quantitative studies documenting the number of qualified coaches (North, 2009; Sports Coach UK, 2011). In comparison to the UK's adult population (92% White and 8% 'BME'), these studies reported that 99% of qualified head coaches and assistant coaches self-defined as White and 1% self-reported as 'BME' (North, 2009, Sports Coach UK, 2011). The reports also stated that 82% of qualified coaches were men and 18% were women, in comparison to the UK's population of men (49%) and women (51%). The limitation of these data sets is that 'race' and gender continue to be addressed as separate stand-alone categories and thus, there is no gender breakdown of

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[3] There is a scarcity of statistical research pertaining to the presence of BME men and women in sport coaching positions. The existing reports (North 2009; Sports Coach UK 2011) that do evidence the underrepresentation of BME men and women coaches do not provide sport specific or cross-sectional statistics to determine the percentage of BME male and females across different sports.

the 99% of White qualified coaches, or the ethnic breakdown of the 18% identified women coaches. These one dimensional approaches fail to account for intersecting identity constructs (Bruening, 2005; Collins, 1986; 2000; hooks 1984; Brah, 1996; Mirza, 2009). As a result, Black women occupy a blind spot in these mainstream monitoring procedures which categorise coaches according to either gender *or* ethnicity and not a combination of both positionings. Qualitative research has further demonstrated that women coaches regardless of 'race' and ethnicity often experience fewer opportunities to practice, learn or develop their skills. They also often experience unequal gendered relations with their male colleagues and superiors, are assumed to be less competent as effective coaches or leaders, and as a result of problematic working environments, cite lower self-confidence (Shaw and Slack, 2002, Allen and Shaw, 2013, Kilty, 2006, Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2011, LaVoi and Dutove, 2012, Norman, 2010a; 2010b; 2012). What remains particularly absent within this literature is a more in-depth, focused understanding of the lived experiences of Black women coaches' and their negotiations of and challenges within the racialised and gendered structural practices and power relations embedded within sport coaching (c.f. Sporting Equals, 2011, Norman et al., 2014, Carter-Francique and Olushola, 2016). It can be claimed that this writing has largely failed to acknowledge the whiteness of sport coaching as an institutional field, and the connected White privileges of representing a racial majority in this arena. This chapter is therefore a much-needed departure from much of the existing sports coaching literature. Rooted in a Critical Race Theory and Black feminist theoretical framework, the approach adopted both supplements and challenges previous established epistemologies, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives in sport coaching by offering an alternative way of knowing; a counter narrative to the dominant ideologies espoused from within 'the coaching system'. This approach also facilitates an understanding of the identities and experiences of Black women as coaches whose contributions and voices have long been systematically marginalised or ignored.

Notwithstanding critiques in the literature of the term 'Black', and recognising the multiplicity of identities and experiences within and across the group of coaches interviewed for this research, we have employed the term 'Black' as a unifying, political and theoretical term (Hylton, 2009, Mirza, 2009). In relation to Black feminist thought, Collins (1986: 16)

writes that whilst "all individuals possess a unique standpoint on, and perspective of their experiences … there will be certain commonalities of perception [and experience] shared by Black women as a group". Hence, Black feminism, as a political project, is a meaningful act of identification for individuals with different experiences and patterns of knowledge that marks a collective presence against common challenges (Mirza, 2009). However, where appropriate we have used the coaches' self-identified terminology as selected by them so as not to divorce this terminology from the wider context in which their particular coaching experiences are situated.

Theorising 'race', gender and their interconnections in sport coaching: a CRT and Black feminist approach

Critical Race Theory (CRT) guided the epistemological framing of the research. CRT is a theoretical approach that fundamentally reveals and challenges racial stratification and unequal power processes in society, which marginalise racially oppressed individuals and groups (Hylton, 2012). Whilst accepting the constructed falsehood, and contested and problematic nature of 'race', and based on the understanding that 'race' and racism are the product of power relations, CRT begins from the premise that 'race' and racism are common-place, endemic and enduring within society (Ladson-Billings, 1998, Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). Based on the five precepts depicted by Solorzano and Yosso (2001), Hylton (2005) outlined five key elements of a CRT framework relevant for sport/coaching scholars and practitioners. These included: 1) The centering of 'race' and racism as core factors in the study of the social relations in sport, and recognising their connection with other forms of subordination and oppression. This centring of 'race' and interconnecting oppressions is key due to the persisting unequal patterns of recruitment and retention in sport coaching based on gendered and racialised structures that privilege certain coaches and disadvantage others. 2) Resisting and challenging dominant ideologies around meritocracy, equal opportunity, 'race-neutrality' and colour-blindness. Because sporting success is widely perceived to be based on merit and talent, CRT challenges those ideologies, which are controlled from a position of power that ignores racialised processes and disparities that function merely as a way to maintain the interests and privilege of dominant groups in sport coaching, for instance. 3) A

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commitment to social justice that incorporates elements of an agenda for liberation and transformation. Applying this critical element of social transformation engages political ideas in order to influence and positively change mainstream sport coaching agendas where 'race' and gender issues have not been centred and contested. 4) Centering the lived experiences and stories of marginalised groups, and empowering them to speak their lived truths as a counter narrative to representations and terms of oppression in sport. This includes the voices of Black women coaches who are rarely heard and often marginalised in sport coaching research and practice. 5) A transdisciplinarity element that encourages researchers to continually broaden their theoretical and methodological frames to ensure that social justice agendas highlight the multidimensionality of oppression.

The transdisciplinary nature of CRT is powerfully explicated through Crenshaw et al's. (1995) work. Crenshaw was appropriating the critiques of Black feminist intellects when she sought to combine feminist legal work with CRT to expose and to challenge inequalities regarding both 'race' and gender in the field of law. Thus, thinking in and between 'race' and gender links CRT and Black feminist thinking. For this research, more specifically, CRT was used as a guiding framework in addition to Black feminist concepts and language, which further supported the interpretation of the coaches' everyday experiences. Thus, the combined CRT and Black feminist approach builds upon the complementary alignment of these two theoretical perspectives. The critical paradigm adopted by Black feminists moves beyond merely describing gender and 'race' as distinctive systems of oppression to naming and critiquing interconnecting systems of institutional, structural and cultural oppression as being part of one overarching structure of domination (Crenshaw, 1989, hooks, 1989, Collins, 2000, Mowatt et al., 2013). Research framed by a combined CRT and Black feminism agenda has rarely been centred in sport and even less so in sport coaching. A major premise of this approach is that within sport coaching, as in society, whiteness and masculinity have been positioned as the desirable 'norm' status (Singer, 2005a). Thus, the power relations within sport coaching systematically advantage whiteness whilst disadvantaging Blackness (Hylton, 2012), and advantage certain forms of masculinity whilst disadvantaging femininity (Norman, 2010a; 2010b; 2012).

Both CRT and Black feminism seek to centralise the lived experiences and identities of those who have been traditionally excluded and inadequately represented in sport policy and practice. Black women coaches, who are often excluded from the privileged centre, are argued to occupy a position of "perspective advantage" (Rollock, 2012: 65), or 'outsider within status', providing a distinctive standpoint on existing social paradigms and 'sociological spaces' (hooks, 1984, Collins, 1986, Collins, 2000). hooks (1984: ix) captures the unique perspective that "outsiders within" can generate in the following quote:

> Living as we did – on the edge – we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as the margin. We understood both.

In many cases, the distinct personal, social and cultural lives of Black women is not synonymous with either the experiences of Black men or White women. Thus, Black feminist thought is grounded in a political standpoint that emancipates and empowers Black women through validating and privileging their testimonies. Furthermore, in line with the social justice and emancipatory politics and praxis element of both CRT and Black feminism, this chapter attempts to reveal and challenge the subtle practices and policies that perpetuate racial and gender stereotypes, ideologies and inequalities within sport coaching. As part of this framework and through the process of privileging those voices that have been traditionally marginalised, we recognise our own privileged position as White, middle-class scholars and the responsibility to disrupt rather than perpetuate power structures within the research process and within coaching literature (see below for further debate). This approach provides Black women coaches' with a platform to voice their lived experiences and perspectives, rather than be marginalised or understood through the agendas of the dominant sport coaching writers, policy makers and practitioners. This knowledge can then be used to transform sport coaching for the benefit of Black women coaches.

Methodology

The data (re)presented in this chapter was collected during two qualitative research studies. The first study, commissioned by sports coach UK, the UK's central agency for the recruitment and progression of coaches, aimed to explore the 'Sporting experiences and coaching aspirations among Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups'. Interviews were completed with six coaches over the telephone by Author A. The second study was part of Author A's doctoral research, in which she completed face-to-face interviews with four coaches (two of the coaches: Carol and Amelia, were interviewed for both studies) to explore their coaching experiences within their particular sport and national governing body (NGB). The coaches were purposively selected primarily on their self-identification of being a 'BME' woman with coaching experience and a UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC[4]) between level one to level four, in one of four sports (two team and two individual sports). Table 1 profiles the eight coaches that were interviewed along with their self-selected pseudonyms. Due to the potential high profile of the participants and the low representation of Black women coaches in the UK, anonymity in relation to the coaches' names and the specific sports they coach was necessary in order to create the freedom for the coaches to be honest and open about their experiences of the coaching system.

Table 1: Profile of the coaches interviewed

Coach	Self-identification of ethnicity	Age range	UKCC coaching qualification level achieved	Coaching status at the time of the interview
Seema	Asian British Pakistani	20-30	Level 1	Previously coached in primary schools but no longer coaching.
Olive	Pakistani	20-30	Level 2	Previously coached in secondary schools but no longer coaching.

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[4] The UKCC established a training and education pathway for coaches, offering five levels of achievement (now revised to four levels of achievement).

Amelia	Black British	40-50	Level 4	Actively coaching at high performance level as a full-time head coach.
Carol	Black Caribbean	40-50	Level 2	Actively coaching at high performance level as a part-time coach.
Barbara	Black British Caribbean	40-50	Level 2	Actively coaching at county level.
Faith	Half Caribbean	20-30	Level 2	Actively coaching at national junior level.
Tina	Indian	40-50	Level 2	Actively coaching at county level.
Sabia	British Muslim	20-30	Level 2	Actively coaching at club level.

Prior to the interview, each coach was briefed over the phone about the research and the interview discussion themes. A pre-planned interview guide, devised for the purpose of the studies, was used to direct interaction with the coaches. Interview guide themes for the first study included: personal background, getting into the sport, playing and coaching context, enablers and barriers to participating, getting into coaching, enablers and barriers to coaching, improving the recruitment and representation of 'BME' groups. Interview guide themes for the second study included: personal background, getting into coaching, progressing in coaching, other coaching ambitions and connected insights and reflections. The aim of these interviews was to give the coaches the opportunity to explore and recall detailed accounts of their own views, feelings and experiences (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). The telephone interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The face-to-face interviews lasted between 30 and 80 minutes. All of the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was used to aid the identification, analysis and reporting of themes across the data set.

Three fundamental principles underpinning feminist and 'race'-based methodologies were specifically applied during this research. This included 1) adopting the view that we, as the researchers were "part of the research" (Bhopal, 2010: 2), allowing participants to address their lives and express themselves and their situation in their own terms; and researching with and for the coaches, not just about them (Bhopal, 2010, Few et al., 2003, Pillow, 2003, Norman, 2010a); 2). In relation to this, we endeavoured to acknowledge and highlight through the research analysis the relevancy of our own identities, experiences and practices and how these may have influenced and informed the production and (re)presentation of knowledge (Frankenberg, 2004, Rollock, 2012, Ladson-Billings, 2000, Ladson-Billings and Donnor, 2005) and 3) it is important to note that the journeys and experiences of all the coaches were individualised and multidimensional, and therefore cannot be essentialised nor generalised. Yet, the coaches' narratives provide a critique of sport coaching organisations in order to help unpack the cultural norms and taken-for-granted assumptions operating within this space. Therefore each counter-story, within a racially and gendered structured organisation, makes a particularly insightful contribution to the research, and the broader sport coaching landscape. Such a perspective lends researchers a clearer understanding of the major structures, power processes, and inequalities within sport organisations that have consistently been ignored by both practitioners and mainstream theorists (Hylton, 2009). The findings are (re)presented under three themes: feeling hyper visible, overcoming the burden of doubt, everyday experiences of sexism.

Feeling hyper visible

The coaches across the group voiced concern that their 'different' bodies were used to symbolise racial and gender diversity for their organisations, to evidence commitment, good practice and institutional progress (see also Ahmed, 2009). Amelia, who represented one of the few Black women who had broken into a powerful, culturally visible role within high performance coaching, expressed concern that she did not want to be seen as merely ticking a box for the organisation. She explained:

> *I know I'm being silly aren't I because I'm trying to be undercover and I can't can I, you know, so like when I go to somewhere and it's like "Let's introduce [Amelia] from [sport] ..." and I'm like really, must I? I'm Black, yes I'm Black, I can't help it, and I'm female [...] but that's what I kind of worry about sometimes, I don't want people thinking "oh we'll tick, she's Black and she's female" (Amelia).*

Carol, who self-identified as Black Caribbean, and had coached within the high performance environment for a number of years expressed similar doubts over her initial appointment as an apprentice coach:

> *When I got the job with [NGB] I think there's a tick box that everybody has to tick isn't it? [...] so I think that was just a tick box, "Oh we got a Black girl, Black female".*

This fear of evidencing an organisational commitment to diversity and the continual physical and emotional toll of 'standing out' within an occupation traditionally dominated by whiteness and masculinity was further illustrated by Olive's experiences, when she attended coach meetings for her team sport:

> *Nobody sort of comes up to your face and says it but you almost get that unsaid feeling sometimes around a room where probably there is one third of the room sat there thinking "Well we know why you're here and we know why you've been picked", ... I went to a meeting a while ago and there was about 35/40 people in this room and number one I was the only ethnic face in the room and number two I was the only female in the room, so it does sometimes make you think is everybody else sat around this room thinking "Well you are just here to tick a box", and that would frustrate me if they did think that (Olive).*

Olive, a Pakistani coach, felt like an outsider and an anomaly within this space. She is surrounded by "*everybody else sat around*" and frustrated by the questioning gaze of those who have possibly determined her body to be 'out of place'. This process of racialisation not only marks Olive's Pakistani female body as different, but interrogates her presence within the spaces of sport coaching. Olive's encounter resonates with Ahmed's (2012: 157) work in which she states that "because of the culture of equal opportunities, arriving as an ethnic minority person can risk being seen as advantaged *because* of your minority status".

Consequently, Olive feels the need to legitimise her existence, to justify her visibility as the only female and only South Asian coach and refute the suspicions that she is there as a "tick in the box" for the organisation (Ahmed, 2012). These narratives also illustrate the interrelatedness of multiple oppressions that shape Black women's experiences within sport coaching experiences that are unique from those of Black men and White women, and are unique to each of the coaches within this group (Bruening, 2005).

The coaches included in both studies carried what Puwar (2004: 62) terms the "burden of representation". This burden relates to being seen as fitting in, being seen to be overtly accepted by other coaches, athletes and organisational personnel, even if motives are continually questioned and actions continually challenged. The burden also relates to the responsibility to succeed as coaches not only to represent the capabilities of Black women within coaching, but also to act as an inspiration to other women. Carol testified to this responsibility, "*I have to [do well] for the females, at least for the next generation – they need to see that women can do it and do a good job*". This responsibility to act as a role model had been embraced by some coaches, as Sabia, a British Muslim level two coach, explained:

> *I've always looked at it as a positive way to say, look, if I'm an Asian girl, I stand out as well, so you know, if I've made it through, it's a new thing ... and you've got to keep going ... because there's a lot of girls out there that will turn away from it, they are talented and they've got the potential but they won't have anyone to look up to, so being an Asian girl, it will help a lot of the younger generation to come forward and actually take it up as a sport (Sabia).*

However, being seen to be a role model was not welcomed by Amelia, as illustrated in the following testimony:

> *Everybody says "You are a role model", which I hate, I don't want to be a role model I just want to be [Amelia], but then I thought to myself well if somebody sees me, another female and Black, doing a role and it inspires somebody else then that is a positive. (Amelia).*

Faith, who self-identified as half Caribbean, and coached at national level for an individual sport, further indicated the challenges of being a role model in relation to balancing her time to pursue her own training as a national player. She explained:

> *I sometimes get asked to do too much coaching and I have to turn things down because I have to kind of think about my own training and my own time (Faith).*

Overcoming the burden of doubt

The challenges and subsequent negotiations attached to being 'different', often resulted in questions surrounding their coaching capabilities - something Puwar (2004: 59) labels "a burden of doubt". The coaches were seen as lacking something, which if they otherwise possessed would make them 'fit in'. For example, Carol explained that she had been "*lumped as thick, illiterate and inarticulate*" because she was Black, and had also been stereotyped as being unable and inexpert because she was a woman:

> *They [coach recruiters in her NGB] think I'm not capable of doing it, I'm not good enough, I haven't had the experience even though I have and I've had it so much but I think I've had it because I'm everything that they don't want to be in the sport. I'm not a part of the old boys [network] that was there (Carol).*

Carol had a proven track record of coaching successful Olympic athletes, yet was not overtly accepted; not embraced as 'one of us' within her coaching organisation and networks due to doubt about her capabilities and expertise. Seema also discussed the multiple and interconnecting burdens confronted by Black women, including racial and cultural issues.

> *There are so many barriers and I think they are more so faced by women but more so faced by BME women where they are fighting a different battle than White Caucasian women would be. ... And cultural hindrances as well (Seema).*

Sabia, a British Muslim coach, highlighted the different battles she fought to become a player and a coach. When asked about any challenges experienced, Sabia responded:

> *Just being Asian, it's not something that, you know, is encouraged in the family … I think being a Muslim girl as well, sometimes when fasting for Ramadan, there's been some restrictions where I couldn't really get out to go and play a game.*

Discussions of cultural and religious difference to dominant sport discourses was only mentioned by Sabia and Seema, illustrating the experiences of these two coaches. Seema further explained that she had struggled to engage women from her South Asian community in coaching sessions for her sport (a traditionally White male dominated sport), in part due to the expectations that they had regarding appropriate activities for South Asian women as well as the feeling that they did not conform to the 'norms' of mainstream sport settings:

> *People would rather come here [community based gym rather than the sport facility] because they can fit in because they can wear traditional clothing but then just stick a pair of trainers on underneath and not have funny looks or people stare at them weirdly. (Seema).*

The fear of prejudice against cultural and religious difference to the dominant discourse of sports sheds further light on the different persisting challenges that South Asian women have to negotiate in terms of cultural identity to feel accepted as sport coaches within their own communities and within dominant sport settings (Ahmad, 2011, Ratna, 2011). According to Sabia's and Seema's viewpoint and experience, some women of South Asian background have to negotiate various cultural barriers but this is not to say that this is the norm for all South Asian girls and women.

Author A, as a researcher and a coach, was conscious of her racial and cultural identity, racial privilege and in this context, her own outsiderness in terms of ethnicity during the interviews. For example, Author A struggled to relate to Carol's everyday reality of being racially stereotyped or Seema's fear of prejudice against cultural difference due to her *inexperience* of

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racism and her own privileged position as a White coach. Indeed, Author A may have been positioned as an outsider by some of the coaches during the interviews because she did not, and could not, share a view of the world stimulated by the experiences of living as a Black woman (Collins, 2000). Yet at other points during the interviews, Seema for example explained that sharing the same gendered identity as Author A encouraged her to disclose experiences of sexism that she would not have openly discussed with a male researcher irrespective of their racial similarities and/or differences. For example, Seema talked about feeling singled out and belittled by the (White) male tutors:

> *I think they were quite pessimistic as well because they were like, when I was the only female they'd say certain things like, treat you kind-of different and it was almost like patronising at times, you know, in terms of like "Oh well are you sure you are going to be able to cope when you go out on the [sports ground]?" (Seema).*

Different identity characteristics became more or less relevant and pertinent at different times within each interview and in our positions as researcher and participants. Conversations often departed beyond the topic of sport coaching to discussions around, for example, age, motherhood, families, relationships and religion. Arguably, the dynamics of power and lines of enquiry were constantly negotiated and re-negotiated (Bhopal, 2010) during the interview process by both Author A and the research participants. This led to the active production and reproduction of social identities, and the recognition of commonalities of experience, as well as differences, between the interviewer and participants during the research process (Phoenix, 2001, Carrington, 2008, Fletcher, 2014; Song and Parker, 1995, Flintoff and Webb, 2012).

Like Seema, Carol foregrounded her gendered identity as she reflected on having to prove her competences as a female coach in response to the constant challenges of feeling undervalued:

> *You know you have to be that much better than all the coaches in the building because you are a female and because you know you are going to get the barriers, ... It's like they talk to you and say "Oh this is my assistant coach" – I'm not assisting you in anything, I'm coaching [athlete] on my own, don't be telling people that I'm your assistant ... he's [male coach] very patronising and he likes to lord it over you ... just to belittle me and they*

> *[other male coaches] say that I'm paranoid ... I should get the recognition*
> *for what I've done, not somebody else getting my recognition, or not even*
> *being valued for what you put in. (Carol).*

These experiences of feeling undervalued and trivialised resonate with the feelings expressed by the female coaches interviewed by Norman (2010b) whom also felt that they operated in the shadows of male coaches. These narratives also illustrate how the coaches' embodied differences are viewed through a sexist lens by the masculine governance of sport coaching that serves to 'other' them through the use of gendered stereotyping. Barbara, who had completed her level two coaching qualification, shared her story of being initially prevented from completing a higher coaching qualification due to the assumption that she was an assistant coach:

> *I think the only barrier that I had was being held off from doing the [coaching*
> *qualification] and I think there was some misunderstanding in that not realising that I*
> *wasn't reporting to another coach, I was the coach and I probably didn't get that*
> *across firmly enough because, as I said, I wished I'd done the [qualification] sooner*
> *because that would have really helped me a lot to help the athletes a lot more*
> *(Barbara).*

These coaches suggested a form of embedded prejudice which left them feeling unsupported in their coaching and unable to progress. As Puwar (2004: 145) argues, 'marked' bodies are under "super-surveillance" in that their presence within a space (in this case, sport coaching) is viewed suspiciously and therefore trivialised; 'they' are not automatically expected to embody the relevant competences. This burden may also account for Amelia's reluctance to take on the mantle of 'role model'; that in part, Amelia also accepted this evaluation of her competency and thus does not deem herself worthy of such a title. These examples illustrate how, within the sporting culture, it is automatically assumed that Black women coaches are lower-ranking than (White and Black) male coaches; they are incapable of occupying senior positions. Whereas the image and performance of (White) men as coaches had become institutionalised as 'normal', unproblematic and unchallenged in terms of being part of the dominant group (McIntosh, 1997, King, 2004). In contrast, the Black female body was immediately gendered, and assumed to be unable to perform the competencies required to be a coach. This reflects and reproduces the gendered discourses underpinning sport coaching

and women's position within this male dominated space (Scraton et al. 2005; Flintoff, 2014) and also, negates the racialised contours of these coaching encounters. Amelia's narrative reveals that she doubted that she would ever be able to progress further to the head coaching position, above her current coaching role:

> *I really can't ... although I would love to say it, but I can't see myself getting the [top] job, ... I don't think they're ready for a female, never mind Black female, to do the job.*

Here, Amelia's pronounced visibility as a 'different body' within a space that has traditionally employed and promoted White men, and to a lesser degree White women, leads to a degree of reservation and uncertainty towards progression that is not likely to be experienced by her (White) counterparts. Amelia also illustrated a reluctant acceptance of these regimes; "*that's just 'cos it is''*, thus these inequalities are normalised and accepted as part of the culture (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012).

Everyday experiences of sexism

Although we approached the interpretation of the coaches' experiences through an intersectional lens, within specific contexts, the coaches' identity as women was often expressed as more salient by the participants than their racialised identity. Previous research has similarly found that some Black female athletes (Massao and Fasting, 2014) and British Asian female football (soccer) players (Ratna, 2008; 2013) chose to forefront sexist discrimination in the production of their testimonies, rather than racism. Ratna (2008, 2013) suggested that this was a coping strategy in an attempt to facilitate a sense of belonging in a pre-dominantly White space, which in/advertently denied racism. In the unpacking of these British Asian players' narratives, it became clear that racism was interconnected to sexism and also contributed to their negative experiences of the game. In our study, although a number of the coaches noted their gender connection with Author A - and sexism was further probed and developed – she did not similarly probe if more insidious forms of racism lurked beneath and connected to the manifestation of everyday sexisms. In reviewing the interview transcripts, the Authors acknowledge that Amelia for instance, did provide cues about her

experiences of everyday racism: that is, the implications of walking her son to an all-White school and having difficult conversations with a head teacher who did not recognise the impacts of this on her or her son's daily experiences of 'the education system'. Arguably, as stated above, moving beyond the sports coaching literature and thinking about mechanisms to facilitate a more equitable sports coaching system (see above) demanded the Authors to better engage with some of the wider critical 'race', gender and sport scholarship, and use that knowledge to more effectively unpack whiteness and White privileges operating both within the institution of sport and the research production process. In future studies, the process of reflective learning has indeed sharpened our sensitivity to our own White privileges as well as the necessity to use our positional power as researchers and interviewers, to further probe the possible inter-relationships between racism and sexism, and thus to critically unpack what the participants say and/or do not say during the interview process (see Ratna, 2008).

However, by making this point, experiences of everyday sexism should not be erased as unimportant and thus insignificant. Indeed, despite the racial and ethnic differences between the participants, they all in various ways questioned the sexist inequalities operating within this White yet still male-dominated space. In particular, the coaches reflected on incidents of everyday sexism which they and the female athletes they coached had been subjected to by male colleagues. In the first example, Carol described how she and her athlete had to move from their warming up area due to the dominance of certain male coaches:

> *The first time I went in there [the warm up area] I was scared … The men don't make you feel welcome at all and I would say they even feel threatened by you. … It's not that I'm not confident it's just that it is a horrible cauldron and they might – like three men, when we were warming up (athlete and I), they came and stepped right in our way. They could see the cones were out, they could see us there because we'd been warming up for ages and they came and they stood right in front of us and stopped [my athlete] from warming up … they're very undermining (Carol).*

The presence of these men, deliberately choosing to occupy the space in which Carol and her athlete were using reinforces the masculine dominance within sport coaching and the symbolic statement that certain bodies are naturally entitled to this space while others are not

(Puwar, 2004). Seema, who had completed her level one coaching award in a traditionally White male-dominated team sport, provided a further example of feeling like an intruder into a territory in which she was not welcome:

> *I don't think the provision was there in terms of for females to be actually like welcomed. [Females] have that dreaded feeling like "What am I doing here? [The coach education courses were] quite sexist in terms of [feeling like the tutors were saying] "it's a man's world, you're out of your depth" so that did come across heavily in there.*

This territory of sport coaching was reserved for the privileged positions of masculinity (and whiteness) in that these identities were unproblematised; they embodied an "unmarked normative position" (Puwar, 2004: 58, Singer, 2005b). The arrival of a female body disturbs the masculine culture; it evokes a reaction from the men. Carol provided a further example that illustrates the physical manifestation of discrimination when male coaches approached her athletes after events:

> *Some coaches, they go up to my athletes and tell them what they've done wrong in the [event]. ... and it really bugs me because they would not do that to another male coach so why do they feel they have the right to do that to me? I mean it really irritates me, it really winds me up. ... I want to tell them what they did right, that's my role, I'm their coach! I don't want anyone else to tell them what they did right or wrong, that's not their role, they're not their coach and a lot of the male coaches do that. It's quite rude actually, disrespectful (Carol).*

These subtle discriminatory actions were not only enacted by male colleagues, but were also enacted by male parents of athletes. Tina, who self-identified as Indian, and had achieved her level two coaching qualification within a typically male dominated team sport, reflected:

> *I think that the main problem was some of the parents, for instance, they thought that I could be a bit of a pushover. ... So they would approach me, and in fact one of the [White male] coaches [who was also a parent] came up to me and challenged me in front of the players and other coaches, which was a bit daunting. So it did create, it created a lot of upset for me ...personally I find people take male coaches a lot [more] seriously and women have to really struggle and stand their ground unless you come in at a really high level. (Tina).*

Tina's example illustrates how the Indian/female body is read as a 'passive' body; a body that can be challenged by those in dominant and privileged positions. In relation to her involvement as a coach, Olive explained her frustration at having to battle against some South Asian men within her community who held traditional ideals and around South Asian femininity and cultural norms, derived from religious beliefs from her South Asian heritage. She was continuously challenged regarding her participation as a coach and her involvement in sport. Yet Ahmad (2011) notes that contrary to assumptions that Islamic requirements restrict Muslim women from participating in sport, the Qur'an and Hadith actively encourage participation. Challenges related to religious heritage were absent from the other coaches narratives, indicative of the different experiences of, and challenges, facing different groups of women within groups. The normalisation of these practices, such as challenging women coaches in front of athletes, illustrates the power of masculine superiority to shape and control the gender relations within sport coaching (Massao and Fasting, 2010). These everyday social practices, such as the examples above, cause other athletes and coaches to mark out and behave in disparate ways towards those coaches who are not afforded the same unearned privileges due to their gender (McIntosh, 1997). These practices support Norman's (2010a; b) argument that it is not necessarily the structural processes that prevent women, and in this case, Black women coaches, entering and developing as sport coaches, nor is it overt discrimination. Rather oppression is "subtle, [and] insidious ideologically based", embedded within an organised system of beliefs and practices that are evident in the everyday interactions and experiences of the coaches (Norman, 2010b: 100).

Concluding thoughts and implications for sport coaching

The focus of this chapter was on exploring the everyday lived realities of eight Black women sport coaches across a range of sports in the UK context. The research, on which this writing is based, provides a unique, empirical contribution to sport coaching sociology through a critical exploration of how gendered and racialised discourses operate within sport coaching

organisational practices. The contribution of this research is also in foregrounding these coaches' lived experiences, providing counter, even uncomfortable, stories, in stark contrast to the commonly documented coaching issues and debates within the wider subject area. The empirical material was (re)presented under three themes: feeling hyper visible, overcoming the burden of doubt, and everyday experiences of sexism. Through this, a further impact of the research is in presenting some of the complexities inherent in the coaching context and coaching identities. In particular, the research demonstrates the complex influences of 'race' and gender on different women's involvement in sport coaching and the unique challenges they face in negotiating multiple layers of oppressions. Although negotiating the gendered culture of sport coaching was centralised in all of the coaches' narratives, these experiences were inter-connected with negotiating whiteness and issues of 'race' and ethnicity. The sport coaching context provided different challenges for the women based on these interconnecting factors, for example whereas Carol, as a Black Caribbean coach, discussed racialised stereotypes related to intelligence, Olive, Seema and Sabia discussed challenges in relation to the attitudes within, and of, their South Asian communities regarding the appropriateness of sport and a sport coaching role for South Asian women. Thus, some South Asian women may have to negotiate parental and cultural resistances to varying degrees; some more so than others. Specific factors, barriers and experiences were unique to all of the coaches and different aspects of racialised and ethnic identities were more or less pertinent for coaches at different times and in different situations. We are conscious that our analysis of these coaches' accounts is limited in terms of providing a detailed exploration of these differences to further entangle the complexity of gender, 'race' and ethnicity and the ways in which these factors impact on the identities and experiences of different groups of women coaches. However, by critically exploring the stories and experiences of the coaches included in this chapter, including women of different ethnicities and religious biographies, we provide evidence of some of the nuances between groups of women within sport. This is one area that previous research into the area of women in coaching is yet to properly and systematically address. We, in hindsight, advocate that researchers should follow Watson and Scraton's (2001: 274) principle and engage in greater reflexivity with responsibility, acknowledge whiteness within research, and crucially translate this "acknowledgment of privilege into action" in terms of thinking more carefully about the questions asked/not asked and the

deeper interrogation of experiences being re-told and re-accounted. The findings in this respect indicate that there is still a clear need for continued analysis of sport coaching to further examine the complexities of inclusion and exclusion for Black women coaches and the operation of sexism with racism as interlocking systems of oppression. There is a further need for research that elucidates the differences within groups of groups to bring alternative realities from the margin to the centre of feminist theorising.

Arguably, thinking critically about the experiential knowledge derived from Black women coaches' real life experiences can still help sport organisations and NGB to recognise, challenge and overturn the routine practices and situations of everyday coaching that are viewed and experienced as "normal" by the dominant coaching group (Essed, 1991). For example, foregrounding the Black women coaches' counter-narratives will inform analyses of unequal social relations, unequal ideologies and stereotypes related to 'race', ethnicity and gender, constructions of sport and coaching 'spaces', and structural discrimination as processes of exclusion. Sport organisations will then be able to name, problematise, understand and begin to challenge the taken-for-granted dominance of whiteness, masculinity and the everyday sexisms that operate within sport coaching. In line with the CRT and Black feminist commitment to emancipatory work and social justice, a number of policy and practitioner implications have already been drawn from the research and fed back to sport coaching organisations. For example, NGBS should seek out new ways to diversify the coaching workforce with transparent systems for recruitment and development, rather than using social networks to appoint positions, and organisational workshops on inclusive cultures should be mandatory for all staff including coaches, coach educators and those working at an organisational leadership level. Crucially, NGBs need to focus greater attention on reforming the sport coaching culture within their institutions, the problematic and exclusionary nature of normative gendered and racialised power relations and not on the individuals who are forced to negotiate them.

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