

Transnational coaches

A critical exploration of intersections of race/ethnicity and gender

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Introduction

At its home Winter Olympics in Sochi in 2014, Russia came a confident first in the medal table, with 13 gold, 11 silver and nine bronze medals. ... it is beyond doubt that a large part in the victory was played by the numerous foreign specialists hired to assist them [the athletes].

(Shestakova, 2016)¹

In an attempt to achieve elite sporting success, athletes are offered access to a plethora of performance related experts including, nutritionists, psychologists, physiotherapists, exercise scientists and world-class coaches. The quote at the start of this chapter reflects a popular mediated understanding of the role 'foreign coaches' play in elite sport. Their purpose is to improve athlete performance so that a country can win more medals. Across most sports the athlete and coach experiences typically occur in contexts that are male dominated and which favor men (Norman, 2016).

The role of the coach, however, goes beyond influencing performance on the pitch, field or court. Coaches also play a vital and visible role in maintaining and challenging dominant sporting discourses (Denison et al., 2015). Norman (2016) suggests that coaches are important agents of social change who could implement visions and values of equity, equality and inclusion. Within this context we assume that coaching is a complex social and cultural practice that is embedded within a specific country's sport structure and culture (Hassanin & Light, 2014). The scholarly literature on migration and international sport refers to such coaches as transnationals since they cross national borders to work/live and are therefore part of social processes that occur between nation-states (Leonard, 2010). Basch et al. (1994: 7) refer to transnationalism as "*a social process whereby people forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that transverse geographic, political, and cultural borders*".

In this chapter we present the argument that transnational coaches contribute to intersectional social processes that go beyond improving athletic

performance and that these processes tend to be ignored by those appointing these coaches and by scholars who study coaching. Since this chapter is part of a book with a central focus on race/ethnicity, we primarily focus on the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to add to understandings of how transnational coaches disrupt, challenge or reinforce dominant ideologies of race/ethnicity and gender. Various scholars have shown that many coaches in Western countries are white heterosexual men (e.g. Bradbury, 2013; Bradbury et al., 2018; Calhoun et al., 2011; Kamphoff & Gill, 2013). Therefore, we also aim to reflect on the position of coaches in terms of gender, heteronormativity and whiteness and the invisibility of this positioning in the scholarly literature. Specifically, we use a post-structural lens to draw on scholarly work on migration, critical management, gender, intersectionality and sport to explore how transnational coaching may contribute to and challenge complex figurations of race/ethnicity and gender.

We begin with a theoretical section in which we briefly explain a post-structural approach and introduce the key concepts relevant to this chapter, including whiteness, discourses of masculinity and heteronormativity. This is followed by two sections that review available literature relating to transnational coaches with a specific focus on race/ethnicity, the gendered complexity of coaching and becoming an elite coach. In the final section of this chapter we discuss the limitations of existing research and suggest the use of potential 'new/alternative' concepts that may advance the field.

Theoretical framework

A post-structural lens assumes that socially constructed boundaries are used to create categories that are subsequently hierarchically arranged (Anthias, 2012). For example, the structure of most sport organizations at the local, national and/or international level is based on two categories using constructed definitions of gender that have been used to create a hierarchy in which more financial, support and media resources flow to men than they do to women. Post-structuralism assumes reality is not only socially constructed but also constituted by discourse. Such an approach attempts to reveal how certain practices are accepted knowledge or common sense and become regimes of truth while other practices and knowledges become invisible (Foucault, 1972). If the presence and practices of transnational coaches, for example, are only seen through the dominant discursive lens of their involvement in the performance of elite athletes, then the ways this presence contributes to social power relations such as race and gender will be obscured to those hiring/working with them, to coaches themselves and to scholars.

We consider whiteness, heteronormativity and masculinity to be discursive practices that advantage those defined as white, heterosexual and

male (McDonald & Shelby, 2018). Long & Hylton (2002: 3) have argued that the intersection of whiteness and masculinity produces “*everyday invisible and hegemonic processes that privilege (and normalize) the position of White [male] identities*”. This intersection positions white male coaches as being essentially or ‘naturally’ better or superior coaches than those marked as nonwhite and/or female. These practices of whiteness and heteronormative masculinity have become the norm in sport/coaching (Hylton, 2009; Lenskyj, 2013; Spracklen, 2013). Whiteness or being labeled as white can serve as a resource for transnational coaches and may intersect with a contextual masculinity to construct a skilled transnational coach. Their apparent skill as well as their position in society gives transnational coaches specific privileges. Their knowledge, perceived authority and expertise and the ways they constitute athletes and sport while negotiating cultural forces in their host country (as well as from their country of ‘citizenship’) may be used to strengthen and shift meanings in local and national constructions of gender, race, ethnicity and nationality (see also Christian, 2018). The privileges of whiteness and desired masculinity may not always be automatic, however, since their meanings depend on time and place (see also Leonard, 2010). We return to this point further on.

The ways in which discursive practices of and about white male transnational coaches reinforce and challenge dominant notions about whiteness and masculinity in sport may receive little attention because they are ‘common sense’ and often invisible (Hughey, 2010). Leonard (2010) contends that privilege in the ‘skilled’ transnational labor market is often based on categorical constructions of ‘race’, gender and citizenship. Analyses of how elite transnationals such as coaches practice gender, race and other relations of power could therefore add to understandings of the gendering and racialization of sport in a specific context. In the following section we summarize the research based on empirical data about the experiences of transnational coaches. Much of the available empirical scholarship around transnational coaching and sport has focused on gender and race as separate categories and ethnicity as being conflated with race and/or nationality. We attempt to show how the focus of such scholarship generally ignores the role of these coaches in the gendering and racialization of sport in the host country.

Review: empirical research on the experience of transnational coaches

Coaches in rugby from New Zealand, gymnastics from Russia, and wrestling from Cuba are among the dozens of outsiders brought in to share their expertise in sports not traditionally associated with Brazil.

(Ramil & Downie, 2015)

In this section we present a general review of empirical research that focuses on the experiences of transnational coaches at the micro and meso levels and highlight the relatively little attention that has been paid to intersections of race/ethnicity and gender. Much of this empirical research on transnational coaches has been conducted at the micro or individual level and is situated within cross-cultural psychology. The focus of these *micro*-level studies is on the adjustments transnational coaches have made while coaching elite athletes in the hosting country. For example, in the quotation used at the start of this section, the coaches are referred to as ‘outsiders’, so what is the lived experience of an outsider like? The results from *micro*-level studies reveal that these coaches primarily attributed the necessity and scope of their adjustments to perceived differences between the culture of host and birth country and to the goal of optimal performance for their athletes. For example, Cummings (2014) describes in detail the adaptation strategies used by immigrant coaches from China, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Soviet Union, Jamaica, Mexico, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Germany who coached high performance athletes in boxing, judo, rowing, synchronized swimming and badminton in Canada. The strategies of these coaches included acquiring necessary communication skills, developing a “sense of belonging” and understanding the nature of (non)hierarchical relationships including those between athlete and coach and contextual constructions of respect. Sasaba et al. (2017) used a similar approach and found that coaches of national gymnastic teams from Japan, Mexico and the USA, working in the USA, attributed differences between themselves and the athletes they coached, to culture. Relatively little attention was paid in these studies, however, to how coaches influence and are influenced by broader social forces related to race and gender (see also De Jong, 2016; Primecz et al., 2016).

Not all scholars who have looked at transnational coaches have used a cross-cultural framework, however. Others have examined the context in which the practice of coaching takes place and the power of knowledge/discourses. For example, Kerr & Moore (2015) used a Foucauldian framework to study the experiences of coaches from the Soviet Union who coached gymnastics in New Zealand. The researchers found that these coaches drew on discourses about childhood, parenting and social ideologies to make sense of their experiences. The use of this theoretical framework enabled the researchers to show how the actions and ways of thinking of transnational coaches not only reflected individual preferences but were also informed by broader social forces.

Others have used a more *meso*-level analysis to explore why coaches migrate. Wicker and colleagues (Wicker et al., 2018; Orłowski et al., 2016, 2018) for example, concluded that push factors such as having a degree in sport science and pull factors such as larger salaries and a permanent contract, played a role in the decisions of German coaches to coach in another

country. Borges et al. (2015) found that transnational Spanish coaches in professional football and handball had been recruited informally and had relied on their networks to attain such positions. Kerr & Obel (2018) also tried to take broader structures and societal forces into account by using actor-network theory to show how multiple human and nonhuman factors together facilitated the migration of ten Russian gymnastic coaches to New Zealand. The material factors included illness, leotards, work visas, finances and education systems while the human factors pertained to individual choices, the support offered by spouses and the wellbeing of their children.

None of the above cited studies explored how the presence of these coaches informed or disrupted the discourses that shaped the structure of sport in the host country. Do transnational coaches, for example, practice colonization in their attempt to transform the system and the athletes they encounter in the host country to mirror the one they have developed elsewhere? A tentative answer to this question is presented by Bairner & Barbour (2005) in their exploratory study of seven elite coaches from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia who migrated to Ireland to develop rugby programs/clubs. The findings suggest the influence of these rugby coaches may have extended beyond the teams they currently coach. The coaches believed they were able to influence the playing style in a significant manner. Specifically, the Irish style of playing was replaced with a style that the coaches had 'successfully' used elsewhere. Bairner & Barbour concluded that the practices of transnational coaches may increase the homogenization of playing style in a sport. The presence of a transnational coach could, therefore, shape a sport, athletes and local coaches in ways that go beyond the current winning of games and improving player performances (see also Carter, 2011). We contend that this influence includes ways transnational coaches and their presence may challenge, reconfigure and reproduce gender and racial hierarchies and power inequalities that may be part of the context in which a transnational coach practices coaching. We return to this point of colonization further on.

The *meso*- or institutional-level impact of the movement of coaches, across national borders, may displace national coaches. Although the media presents announcements about the hiring of 'foreign' coaches as a positive development for the hosting country, local coaches and athletes may see such appointments in other ways. A few accounts in the media point to resistance from national coaches to the advent of transnational coaches. For example, Akhil Kumar, a championship boxer from India argues that:

We should be encouraging young coaches in India. They are the ones who know the system and realities of sport inside out... We shouldn't allow foreign experts to dictate us... If the foreign coaches are so good, then why are they not employed at the sub-junior level? If they are so good, let them shape youngsters. Why are finished products handed to

them? If I come into the national camp after winning the national title, am I not an almost finished product given to them?

(Rediff.com, 2018)

Similarly, Ryan Giggs, the former Manchester United winger and assistant manager, argued that there are too many foreign coaches in the Premier League leaving little opportunity for local talent:

There's a lot of top quality foreign coaches in the Premier League, but there's also a lot of quality British coaches and managers out there but they don't get the chance to prove what you can do and see what you can do with a talented team. I just think on the balance, there's too many foreigners at the moment and British coaches probably just don't get the chances.

(Eurosport, 2017)

While it could be argued that transnational opportunities are equally available for British coaches, they are not filling positions in other national leagues at the same rate as transnational coaches are filling up the Premier League (Spencer, 2018).

This preference for the appointment of transnational coaches instead of national coaching talent is not confined to professional sport but also occurs in amateur/Olympic sports. Kerr & Cervin (2016) investigated the lack of appointment of women coaches of elite gymnasts in New Zealand and Australia. They found that boards looked to other countries and recruited men instead of first looking at those available in New Zealand and Australia. These available coaches were often women. None of the studies cited above looked specifically at how and why these specific coaches were recruited and hired.

Although most of the transnational coaches described in the above-mentioned studies seemingly adapted to normative practices in their host country, at the same time, possibly contributing to the cultural homogenization of a sport, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to how their presence may disrupt sport systems and gender and racial hierarchies. In the following we expand on ways the presence of transnational coaches may contribute or challenge the racialization and gendering of sport and comment on the lack of research in this area. This emphasis on what is lacking and needed should contribute to a research agenda on this topic.

Transnational coaches: race and ethnicity

Billy, listen to me. White men can't jump.

The above quotation is a line taken from the 1992 film 'White Men Can't Jump' about two basketball hustlers, one black, one white. In the movie this

line is spoken by Sidney to Billy Hoyle, a former college basketball player who makes his living by hustling 'streetballers' who assume he cannot play well because he is white. Billy uses his opponents' racial stereotypes to his advantage as he hustles them in pickup games by encouraging his opponents, most of whom are black, to falsely believe they have a natural advantage over him due to his race and clothing style. While this example plays out between two fictional players, research has shown how coaches use racial or gender discourses to describe the skills and work habits of (male) athletes (e.g. Cunningham et al., 2006; De Haan & Knoppers, 2019; Rankin-Wright, Hylton, & Norman, 2016). Khomutova (2016) is one of the few researchers who looked at constructions of both race and ethnicity in international sport. She explored how professional basketball coaches of multicultural basketball teams in Central Europe constructed race and ethnicity. These teams consisted of athletes whom coaches identified as differing in ethnicity, nationality and race. Khomutova found that these coaches engaged in productive strategies to negotiate what they constructed as different playing styles. The coaches attributed these differences in styles to ethnicity and saw them as emerging from various subcultures based on ethnicity/country of origin. The coaches said they respected these ethnic and national differences and that they worked hard to try to accommodate them. This was different for perceived racial differences in behaviors and playing styles of black athletes, all of whom were African-American. Specifically, these coaches constructed black players and their playing styles as a source of problems. Few, if any, coaches had developed constructive strategies to overcome these 'racial differences'. 'Race' was seen as fixed and as black.

The migration of skilled sport labor such as occurred in these multicultural basketball teams seems, therefore, to have included a transnational migration of discourses about black and white bodies. Specifically, dominant negative discourses about African-American athletes were accepted uncritically. Khomutova did not attribute the actions of these coaches to practices of whiteness and/or masculinity nor did she examine why coaches attempted to accommodate (white heterogenous) ethnicity that they saw as fluid while constructing race as fixed, homogenous, synonymous with being black and conflating it with nationality (American). The intersections between ethnicity, race and nationality in transnational sport and coaching, and the role masculinity plays in that, has been largely ignored (see also Ryan & Martin, 2013). Yet, as we argue in the following these are social relations of power that shape both transnational coaches and the contexts in which they work (and travel).

Hylton (2009) and Fenton (2003) have argued that race and ethnicity are often conflated. They contended that relations of power converge in race and ethnicity since both are often used to construct categories that are used to create social hierarchies. These hierarchies are used to distinguish minority populations from numerical majorities and to label these minorities as

Other. Hylton emphasizes the constructedness of these definitions by pointing out that “there is a ‘naturalness’ attributed to socially constructed, sometimes shared categories that sets up arbitrary boundaries” (Hylton, 2009: 15). Race and ethnicity may be confounded even more when transnational coaches move to a specific country other than their own. They may be privileged due to skin color or ethnic markers in one setting while their status in another setting may limit those privileges. For example, nationality is also often conflated with ethnicity, and both may be seen as being synonymous with culture. The example of Ruud Gullit, a Dutch football player and manager of Surinamese descent, illustrates this. He was a famous Dutch football player who later became a football manager and worked as coach in England beginning in 1995. He named himself an “overseas coach” rather than naming himself a black [male] coach (King, 2004). This example suggests identities are fluid and that race/nation/ethnicity and gender intersect in different ways depending on the situation and who is doing the defining.

These categories of ethnicity and nationality that are assumed to produce identities are not homogenous, nor is behavior an automatic reflection of (ethnic) identity. Coaches may reproduce and participate in certain traditions or customs and they themselves or researchers may assign them a certain ethnicity based on that behavior. This behavior may, however, be instrumental instead of being an expression of self-perceived identity or subjectivity. For example, various transnational coaches and their athletes in their ‘host’ country in the studies cited above, suggested that the transition to being a coach in Canada and the United States meant they could not engage in what is seen as authoritarian behavior. They seemed to associate this behavior with ethnicity/nationality (Cummings, 2014; Sasaba et al., 2017; Schinke et al., 2013). Various studies on physical and emotional abuse and authoritarian behavior in sport coaching have shown, however, that such behavior is not specific to one area of the world or to a stable ethnic descriptor (see, for example, Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2017; Pinheiro et al., 2014). Rather, these scholars argued that such behavior is often a result of dominant discursive practices about developing mental toughness in young athletes.

Nationality is not only often associated with ethnicity but may also be constructed as an actual community that exists in a specific place. However, as Anderson (2006) argues, this community is more a social imaginary than it is actual since all those living within the borders of a country do not know each other. Anthias (2002) contends that such an imagined community needs an Other from which it can imagine itself as being different or separate. Also, those living within the borders of a nation state or community are not all assigned the same ethnic status. Someone with a Dutch passport may be ethnically rooted in China and be seen as Chinese, as an Other, although born and raised in the Netherlands. When she becomes a transnational coach, the ways in which she is ‘seen’ in her host country may depend more

on how Chinese race/ethnicity is constructed in that time and place than meanings assigned to Dutch-ness and will intersect with constructions of gender by transnational coaches.

Gender: transnational coaches

The male coaches thought that they had a harem. We [female athletes] were the harems of women that followed them around and did everything the men said, and they got a bit carried away with that. I'm talking about two specific foreign coaches...

(de Haan & Norman, 2019: 6)

As the foregoing quote suggests, transnational coaches come to a country with internalized conceptions of masculinity and femininity that shape their behavior. Gender and nationality of athletes are explicitly institutionalized and policed in international sport through the use of fixed categories defined by the International Olympic Committee while race and ethnicity as categories of analysis are often more contextual as the other chapters in this book show. In contrast to athletes, a coach does not need to undergo gender verification nor does s/he need to be a national of the country s/he is representing. Transnational coaches that are recruited to work in countries other than where they live, can work freely across national boundaries assuming they can obtain a visa. There are no formal institutional requirements for coaches that restrict their participation in international competition and their transnational mobilities. Informally, race/ethnicity/nationality and gender and heteronormativity will, however, play a role in selection procedures and, consequently, in the mobility of transnational coaches (Tudor, 2018). The host country bears a great deal of responsibility for their choice of coach, recruitment and selection but also the ways such appointments may shape a sport and sport culture and contribute to its racialization and gendering.

In the migration literature gender is often associated with women (Hearn et al., 2006). Gender tends to be constructed as an individualized expression of skilled transnationals and may ignore the culturally specific contexts of such constructions. Consequently, transnational coaches may vary in the ways in which they construct women's and men's sports and difference. Conversely, gender is institutionalized in sport within a specific nation so that time and place may shape these localized constructions as well (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2003). Comparative research is needed that looks at how transnational coaches negotiate, challenge and strengthen these discourses.

Although the underrepresentation of women in coaching has received a great deal of scholarly attention (see Burton, 2015 for a summary), gender is often neglected in scholarly research on skilled labor migration of professionals including that in coaching. A recent exception is our own work (De

Haan & Knoppers, 2019; De Haan & Norman, 2019). We looked at the gendered practices used by transnational coaches to constitute elite athletes. We found that these coaches, regardless of country of origin, created an essentialist gendered hierarchy in which male athletes were the norm and the actions and ideas of elite female athletes were discounted. We did not examine how these gendered practices were connected to constructions of ethnicity and nationality, however.

Although research has explored the experiences of lesbian coaches (Krane & Barber, 2005; Norman, 2012), little research is available that has focused on transnational coaches and explored “*existing heterogeneous expressions of queerness across the globe*” (Mizzi, 2015, no page number). We assume this lack of research includes transnational coaches as well. Mizzi, who compared the work experiences of gay male educators teaching overseas, found that gay male educators who had moved from the global south to Canada felt that in order to ‘fit’ or assimilate they had to take on an identity based on sexual orientation that to them was a problematic Western concept.

Ward & Schneider (2009: 438) argue, however, that such a focus on identities in a transnational context is too narrow in scope. They contend that:

heteronormativity shapes the production of identities, relationships, cultural expressions, and institutional practices, revealing it to be a force with consequences well beyond the discrimination against lesbians and gay men... heteronormativity gives form to a broad range of cultural forms and societal institutions that are all too often analyzed without attention to the specter of queerness but also to the ways that racism, socioeconomic inequalities, and the colonial gaze are dependent upon ideas about normal bodies, identifications, and sex practices.

Much of the work on migration and sport does not specifically address gender, however, let alone heteronormativity. Similar to work done in migration studies when gender is addressed, the focus is on men (and their wives); gendered practices and institutions rarely receive critical attention (see also Kunz, 2016; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). An exception is the work of Kerr & Obel (2018). They paid attention to women partners of male transnational coaches. Some of these women accompanied their husbands while others stayed in the country of origin. This focus is a welcome addition to the transnational sport literature since it illustrates how transnational coaching practices have consequences for more than the elite athletes whom they coach. A focus on transnational coaches and their partners could explore how such practices strengthen sport as a site for the practice of heteronormativity.

Research is therefore needed on gender as a construction in transnational coaching to explore how it “*permeates a variety of practices, identities, and institutions implicated in immigration*” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003: 9 see also Yuval-Davis, 1997). As we have argued in previous sections this heteronormativity intersects with race/ethnicity and nationality. This complexity has however rarely been captured in research on transnational coaches.

Possible approaches: researching transnational coaches and their intersectional practices

In this section we present various ways such research could be conducted. The possibilities presented here are not meant to be exhaustive but are briefly described to encourage readers to conduct research in this area.

Post-colonial approach

Current constructions of race and gender in sport at both local and transnational levels can be viewed through the lens of post colonialism (Chen & Mason, 2018; Leonard, 2010; Lugones, 2007). A post-colonial lens questions normalized assumptions of the cultural binary representations of the Self/Other. Fechter & Walsh (2010: 1203) contend that “*the post-colonial self becomes figured as competent, capable and ‘developing the Other’*”. The quote at the beginning of this chapter illustrates this well. Transnational coaches are recruited because they are assumed to be skilled and able to develop athletes. The transnational coach is the colonizer and the athletes in the host country are the colonized. Much of the expansion of sport across the globe is based on Western sport so that in essence the practices of transnational coaches can be seen as a colonial endeavor (Chen & Mason, 2018). A post-colonial approach, however, assumes that the distinction between the athletes as the Other and the coach as the Self is a false distinction since culture is assumed to be hybrid and fluid. A post-colonial approach explores continuities and disruptions over time in ways of thinking, relationships and attitudes about the Self and Other. Specifically, the use of such an approach means scholars need to pay attention to the multilayered and intersectional contexts in which transnational coaches are situated and how they create expertise and regimes of truth (Fechter & Walsh, 2010).

Intersectionality and translocational positionality

A queer perspective is an approach that could inform intersectional analyses of whiteness and masculinity of transnational coaches. It is an approach that assumes heteronormativity is an organizing principle of “*the matrix of domination*” (Ward & Schneider, 2009: 434). The use of a queer lens makes visible and problematizes practices that strengthen or reproduce

heteronormativity (see also Calhoun et al., 2011; Tudor, 2018; Ward & Schneider, 2009). This could include an examination of how heteronormative discursive practices of transnational coaches are racialized and how those practices circulate in a specific sport to become regimes of truth, that is, how they become discourses that coaches and those around them accept and make function as true (see also Foucault, 1972). Such a queer analytical focus could be used to explore how ethnicized/racialized and gendered bodies are embedded in (post-colonial) constructions of transnational coaches and their practices, what sustains these practices and the norms that emerge from them. This intersectional focus can add to understandings of the dynamic relationships between white normativity and heteronormativity and how “‘normative sexual hierarchies’ structure global processes such as migration” (Ward & Schneider, 2009: 435).

Power relations are fluid, however, and simultaneously operate in contradictory and different forms. Any research project on transnational mobility must not only explore intersectionality but also *differentiate* between various relations of power such as race/nationality/ethnicity/ gender. Tudor (2018: 14) suggests that differentiations among these power relations “*are necessary to be able to define and deconstruct specific oppressions, ascriptions, exclusions and abjectifications*”. A focus on differentiation could give researchers insight into “*the specificities of these various relations of power and to formulate the precise and ever shifting forms of resistance*” and how those might be specific to not only time and place but also to a sport (Tudor, 2008: 14). Tudor also argues that this exploration of specific power relations should be part of a larger research agenda in which scholars are: “*able to think of them [various power relations] as assemblages... by analyzing ambivalences, contradictions and blurry cross-fadings...*” (Tudor 2008: 14).

A focus on a specific location of a transnational coach may be a way to explore this differentiation. A transnational coach, for example, may be in a position of dominance in her or his function as coach but the meanings assigned to this function or position may intersect with other subordinate ascribed categories of race, gender and ethnicity not only within the sport system but also in her/his life outside of sport. Transnational coaches may move from one country to another after an Olympic or World Cup cycle. The ways in which these coaches strengthen or disrupt local or national dominant practices of heteronormativity, masculinity and their intersection with whiteness may vary by location. Anthias (2002) suggests using the term ‘translocational’ and ‘translocational positionality’ to describe conflation and intersection of social relations of power such as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexuality in a specific location. This concept can be used to:

denote the ways in which social locations are products of particular constellations of social relations, and in terms of relationality and experience at determinate points in time; it considers them within a spatial and temporal context. It points to the existence of contradictory and shifting social locations where one

might be in a position of dominance and subordination simultaneously on the one hand or at different times or spaces on the other.

(Anthias, 2002: 501–502)

The concept of translocational positionality to study differentiation in transnational practices in coaching does not necessarily mean those meanings and their associated practices are fixed. Nor does a focus on constructions of race/ethnicity and gender mean they should be seen as separate narratives in which a study of gender or race assumes but does not mention specific practices of masculinity and/or whiteness (Hylton, 2009).

The gendered and racialized meanings assigned to practices of transnational coaches may also be very unstable and perhaps not reflective of a socially constructed category of race or gender at all. They may also replicate dominant ways of coaching that have become part of a sport over time. A coach from Russia may be constructed as authoritarian due to perceived notions of ethnicity/race/gender generally assigned to such nationals. This construction may overlook the presence of many coaches in the host country who also use such styles as we indicated earlier. Transnational coaches will engage in/perform and emphasize certain practices of masculinity and femininity that intersect in some ways with whiteness, but they may differ relatively little from those in which national coaches engage in the same sport. The ways in which translocational positionality informs practices of transnational coaches could therefore give further insight into the fluidity of the conflation of race/ethnicity/nationality and gender.

Conclusion

To conclude, we suggest research is needed that explores how discursive practices of transnational and national coaches reconfigure and challenge dominant ideologies of race/ethnicity and gender, their intersections as well as power inequalities and how these meanings and configurations are negotiated in a specific time and place. Does the increase in transnational coaches strengthen dominant gender and race/ethnic ideologies and norms in sport and/or does it also challenge or question them? (see also Pessar & Mahler, 2003). Such research not only could provide insight into the ways social relations of power are challenged and reproduced through national and transnational coaching practices but could also enrich scholarship in other areas such as critical studies of (sport) migration, gender, race/ethnicity and of diversity management (De Jong, 2016).

Note

- 1 This does not exclude the possibility that other factors such as doping and home advantage played a role in 'the victory' as well.

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