

Malign and covert nationalism within British newspapers reporting of Eddies Jones' appointment as head coach of the men's England national rugby union team

The appointment of Eddie Jones as the England men's rugby union head coach in 2015 was significant because he was the first foreign-born individual to occupy this role. After sourcing 136 British newspaper articles published one week either side of Jones' official announcement for his appointment on 20th November 2015, this study identified three overarching themes for how narratives of this event were framed: 1) negativity and the loss of national identity; 2) positivity and need for cultural change underscored with conditional acceptance; and 3) declinism with the need for succession planning. Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, embodied cultural and symbolic capital were drawn upon to theorise how much of the media initially rejected Jones' appointment. The results indicated an overt and xenophobic 'Little Englander' narrative was first presented by some journalists based on Jones' perceived Australian habitus and capital not reflecting the cultural values attached to English rugby union. Even when reports were positive, binary 'one of our own/us' and 'outsider/them' narratives represented symbolic violence through a malign 'Little Englander' attitude, albeit one that is a more covert form of discrimination than has previously been reported. Recommendations for continued analyses that acknowledge temporality within this discipline are finally presented.

Keywords – Little Englander; media analysis; symbolic violence; sport migration; sport immigration

The rise of the sporting celebrity phenomenon has grown exponentially during the latter parts of the twentieth century and continues to intensify in the early parts of the twenty-first century (Whannel, 2002). Subsequently, throughout the world, many sportspeople are now widely regarded as celebrities (Andrews and Jackson, 2001). The role in which the media occupies in elevating a sportsperson to celebrity status has been widely accepted as being a

central mechanism (Cashmore, 2010). This has led to a well-established field of research having analysed how the print media specifically report upon sporting events and celebrity athletes (Biscomb and Matheson, 2019).

Consumed within these reports are additional narratives which are communicated to the public in either an overt or covert manner. Due to capitalism and the competition for market share, journalists now sensationalise their reports so that their articles stand out from one and another (Bourdieu, 1998). Most sports journalists, therefore, do not merely report the facts and statistics of games and performances anymore, but instead communicate how sporting accomplishments, or lack of, affect a range of sociocultural issues such as national identity (Clavane and Long, 2021; Vincent et al., 2018). Poulton (2004: 439) is one who identified this interrelationship between sport, culture and the media by coining the phrase of “mediated patriot games” to explain how journalists and the media circulate biased, hegemonic and nationalistic ideologies during the coverage of sports mega events (see also Billings and Eastman, 2003).

Although researchers have studied a range of sociocultural topics relating to how the written media cover sport and propel sporting figures into celebrity icons, the focus of this literature has retained an emphasis on analysing media representations of athletes (e.g. Bartoluci and Duopona, 2019; Biscomb and Griggs, 2009; Black and Fielding-Lloyd, 2019; Groves and Griggs, 2016; Jakubowska and Ličen, 2019; Poulton and Maguire, 2012; Tulle, 2014). In addition to athletes though, head coaches of professional and national sports teams are now firmly included within this sporting celebrity culture. When national coaches reside over successful team performances the media provide them with revered “totemic” status (Skey, 2015: 283) by praising their accomplishments. The public then view these coaches as a “celebrity on a global scale” (Wagg, 2007: 441). Upon failure, however, the focus of the media’s criticism often centres on the individual head coach, ultimately culminating in either

their dismissal or resignation. Yet, with the focus of athletes' media representations, the existing literature in this area has largely overlooked the role and status of head coaches and their associated identities, including their nationalities.

With the proliferation of elite head coaches migrating to the UK, their identities and nationalities has now become an important part of the media discourse on elite sport. This has been particularly the case amongst English rugby union, most notably after the English Rugby Football Union (RFU) appointed the Australian, Eddie Jones as head coach of the England men's national rugby union team on November 20th, 2015. For the purposes of this article, this appointment was deemed to be of significance based on three criteria. Firstly, whilst the appointment of foreign-born head coaches may be commonplace in other international sporting contexts due to the onset and growth of globalization and labour migration (e.g. Orłowski et al., 2017; Tao et al., 2019), it has seldom been seen within British and English national sports, let alone never having before occurred in the men's English national rugby union team. Secondly, rugby union is one of the most popular participatory and spectator sports in England, and as such, is seen in English society as an iconic team sport that quintessentially embodies an English culture (Collins, 2009). Thirdly, Eddie Jones' appointment was made at a time where Britain, and England specifically, encountered strengthening populist attitudes (Brubaker, 2020) where a growth of Pan-European right-wing populist ideologies has emerged in response to increased multiculturalism and globalisation over recent decades (Vieten and Poynting, 2016). As part of this, there has been a rise of anti-immigration agendas which have been fundamental for those aligning themselves to these right-wing political ideologies (Hogan and Haltinner, 2015). Such national antipathy culminated in the historic 2016 referendum result of the British electorate voting in favour for the UK to leave and thus revoke its membership from the European Union (EU).

This final point further frames the rationale to conduct this study as Eddie Jones' appointment in 2015 was made during an era which coincides with perceptions amongst large parts of the British population that immigration of foreign-born citizens to the UK, and England specifically, were at unsustainable levels (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017). This growth of multinationalism has been regarded by some to have diluted England's national identity (see Heath and Tilley, 2005). Whilst anti-immigration attitudes strengthened across the UK, labour migration of elite sports coaches to England has not received the same levels of scrutiny or disapproval when compared to immigration throughout the rest of English society. Apart from a small body of research, the topic of foreign-born coaches fulfilling the roles of head coach for English national teams seems to have been separated from this national debate. This seems somewhat contradictory given that rugby union is widely regarded to be a central feature of English society and culture (Black, 2016; Malcolm, 2012; Polley, 2004; Porter, 2004; Tuck 2003b).

National identity and the head coach role

National identity itself is an ambiguous social construct. It nonetheless attempts to symbolise what the population collectively consider it means to be, for example, 'British' (Vincent et al., 2011, 2018). Within the UK, however, given the recent encroachment of British devolution, what it means to be 'British' has now been replaced by many citizens with what it means to be either 'English,' 'Welsh,' 'Scottish' or 'Northern Irish' (Gibbons, 2011; Gibbons and Malcolm, 2017; Malcolm, 2009; Vincent et al., 2010; Wigham, 2014). The growth of devolution and the emergence of populist right-wing political ideologies has created the 'Little Englander' concept based on insular and protective agendas against 'globalization' and 'European integration' (Maguire, 2011: 990). Yet, the connection between sport and national identity is acknowledged to be interrelational (Gibbons and Malcolm, 2017). Whilst this relationship can be complex and not solely reducible to national teams sporting achievements,

national identity is regarded to be fluid, socially (re)constructed because of political and cultural variables that partly includes sporting accomplishments (Dóczi, 2012; Maguire, 2011). As Tuck (2003a: 511) surmises, national identity is “processual, or historical... contoured by invented traditions.”

The relationship between nationalistic attitudes and the appointment of foreign-born head coaches has previously been analysed in some part by Skey (2015). Here, Skey (2015: 276) conducted a “basic content analysis” on how the English written media reported the England men’s national football team appointing one English born (Steve McClaren in 2006) and two foreign-born head coaches (Sven-Göran Eriksson in 2000 and Fabio Capello - an Italian in 2008). The conclusions drawn from this were that a more open, cosmopolitan and accepting approach of foreign-born head coaches framed journalists’ reports. The caveat to this, however, was that Skey (2015) claimed this acceptance to be conditional, one that was based on the continuation of positive on-field team performances and results.

Conditional acceptance has also been found within Griggs and Gibbons’ (2014) study which compared British newspaper coverage of Fabio Capello’s resignation as England head coach (8 February 2012) with the same day’s coverage of an English football manager’s acquittal of alleged tax evasion. In this instance, Capello’s unsuccessful tenure meant the authors found journalists to have reversed their initial benign and conditional acceptance into a malign form of xenophobia that reinforced the ‘Little Englander’ attitude.

The intention of the present article is to build upon this line of enquiry. The focus of analysis here is on Eddie Jones’ appointment as head coach of the England men’s national rugby union team in 2015. With analyses already having been conducted on Sven-Göran Eriksson’s appointment as the first foreign-born head coach of the men’s England national football team in 2000 (Skey, 2015), the appointment of Eddie Jones in rugby union merits

attention because of rugby's rising commercialisation and globalisation since the turn of the twentieth century (O'Brien and Slack, 2004; Tuck 2003b). The inclusion of rugby union also enables a broader overview to be conducted for how the British media interpreted the nationality of foreign-born head coaches to have impacted upon perceptions of English national identity across multiple sporting fields when compared to existing literature within English association football.

Moreover, analysing Eddie Jones' appointment affords a comparison against the existing literature of potential class-based differences, given that rugby union in the UK is widely regarded to be a middle-class sport (Collins, 2009) whereas association football is seen to be a lower-class sport that dominates media coverage and every day sporting debates (Giulianotti et al., 1994).¹ The print media in the UK is also accepted to be class-based with the middle to upper-class broadsheets dedicating more column inches to reporting rugby union stories in comparison to the lower-class 'red top' tabloids that prioritise football.

For context, the distinction of rugby union on the premise of class-based allegiances has longstanding historical roots. These cultural conditions have become culturally entrenched and remain contentious points which have resulted in distinct divergencies between those associated to rugby union in contrast to those aligned with other sports such as association football and rugby league. The bifurcation in England between rugby union and rugby league occurred in the late nineteenth century as a result of northern clubs wanting to financially subsidise their players and the largely southern teams wanting to continue abiding by the

¹ Additional sports could have been included for analysis, such as cricket, after the English and Welsh Cricket Board appointed the Zimbabwean, Duncan Fletcher as the first foreign-born head of the men's national team in June 1999. This case has not been included as the British media reporting of this event was significantly less than the rugby union and football cases. Nevertheless, this is a further poignant example of what can be considered as a sea-change of organisational management within English and British culture in respect of what seems on the surface an acceptance of multinationalism and the willingness to appoint foreign-born individuals to such eminent national level head coaching roles within iconic British/English sports.

Muscular Christian beliefs of amateurism which still grounds their distinct identities and sub-culture (Collins, 2009). Falcois (2017: 82) is one who described how rugby union continues to separate itself from rugby league as well as other sports like association football, by celebrating its middle-class qualities of upholding suspicion of sports that place a “premium on victory” and those that maintain “a preference for monetary rewards.” These processes of class-distancing in rugby union were not only seen in England, however, but throughout the British Empire. Through colonialisation, rugby union was one sport amongst several which became popular in Australia and other Antipodean nations. A legacy of colonialism has seen a fierce Anglo-Australian sporting rivalry emerge between England and Australia that also has class-based foundations (Horton, 2009). This specific rivalry manifests itself regularly within cricket as part of the biennial ‘Ashes’ fixture (Birley, 1999). It has also manifested in rugby union, most notably in the men’s 2003 World Cup final where England beat Australia in Sydney, which incidentally saw Eddie Jones as the head coach of the Australian team at the time.

To assist with theorisation of how the media report and present narratives associated to phenomena within the cultural field of rugby union, the following section introduces the work of Pierre Bourdieu. In so doing, it provides a rationale for why Bourdieu’s theoretical framework has been employed as it offers an alternative, yet original perspective on the phenomena of national sports team appointing foreign-born head coaches. To date, most of the literature has either been descriptive and a-theoretical or has been dominated by the application of figural sociological frameworks. Whilst these have been informative and contributed to a greater understanding of how national identity is (re)produced, the following manuscript offers an alternative interpretation that can add to the scholarly conversation in this area.

Theoretical framework

To theorise data in this instance, Pierre Bourdieu's sociological framework has been applied. Although Bourdieu did not directly study journalism, his book entitled *On Television and Journalism* (Bourdieu, 1998) discussed how the relational interaction between journalists and the society in which they reported upon contributed to modes of cultural reproduction. Neveu (2007: 336) is one who has advocated researchers wanting to analyse journalism to use Bourdieu's praxeology, because it enables theorisation to be made "relatively, to move from micro to macro, to go beyond binary choices such as structure and agency" for understanding cultural practices and the array of ideologies that are produced and reproduced within society.

At the centre of Bourdieu's (1984, 1986, 2001) analysis was a critique on social class-based inequality. Bourdieu's conceptual triad of *field* (Bourdieu, 1985, 1993), *capital* (Bourdieu, 1986) and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) was designed to reveal the inter-relationship between how these concepts consciously and subconsciously informed the actions of social agents in what Bourdieu (1990) termed as *practice*, but also the discriminatory aspects of society in what Bourdieu (1984: 118) termed as *symbolic violence*: "the agency which possesses the power of legitimate naming, i.e., the power enabling official imposition of the legitimate view of the social world."

The significance of Bourdieu's (1985) concept of field is most notable for the decision to analyse the media reports of Jones' appointment through a Bourdieusian lens. For Bourdieu (1985), all social agents were regarded to be positioned in social fields, layered and delimited social spaces where hierarchical struggles for power were enacted between other social agents. Each field has its own legitimised normative values based on historical conditions that produce social norms (Bourdieu, 1998). Instead of fields being conceptualised as separate individual spaces, Bourdieu argued them to be delimited in nature, meaning agents were not reduced to being positioned into just one field, rather they were positioned across several fields. For

example, elite sport can be considered as one overarching field. Situated amongst this overarching field, rugby union and other sports such as football can both be regarded as being their own separate delimited fields; as although each field may share some practices and tastes, they nevertheless have their own customs, etiquette and practices (see Purdue and Howe, 2015). In further defining field, and in using Eddie Jones as an example of how agents can be situated across multiple fields, English and Australian rugby union can also be allocated as their own respective delimited fields. Although they are part of the overarching field of rugby with some shared customs, rules, culture and practices, they each have their own historical norms, rules, cultures, practices and identities that define them from each other (see Blackett et al., 2017).

For every agent, power is attained through the accumulation of capital which Bourdieu (1985, 1986) conceptualised to come in the form of several species, either: economic, social, cultural, physical and symbolic. Agents possess each species of capital in an institutionalised, objectified or embodied form. The commonly cited quote of “capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field” (Bourdieu and Wacqaunt, 1992: 101) is worth reiterating here on account that the weighting and volume for these species of capital is dependent upon the legitimisation from the respective field regarding its historical and cultural norms. For example, the historical Anglo-Australia rivalry is widely accepted to manifest and be reproduced within the sporting firmament (Maguire, 1993, 2011). As previously noted, the differing cultural attitudes of the two nations’ practices of approaching and competing in sport have been well documented. Therein, whereas Eddie Jones could be regarded as possessing heightened levels of capital within the field of Australian rugby, this capital may not be successfully transferred when transitioning into the delimited field of English rugby union. Jones’ own nationality along with his perceived personal dispositions of having a quintessentially strong Australian accent, perceived brash/forthright attitude and persona when speaking to journalists (embodied cultural

capital), his relative success from working in Australian rugby after having taken the national team to the final of the 2003 World Cup as head coach (objectified symbolic capital), and the subsequent personal connections he has developed over his career (institutionalised social capital), may provide him with esteem and good standing within the Australian rugby field. These species of capital within the field of English rugby union, however, may or may not be highly valued. In such a light, Bourdieu (1984, 1986) emphasised the dynamism to the value of capital as agents could gain or lose capital.

Indeed, Eddie Jones' socialisation within the delimited field of Australian rugby union, according to Bourdieu, leaves an indelible imprint on the formation of his personal dispositions and overall character. The concept of habitus identified this subconscious acculturation and internalisation of the field's norms from which Jones and any other agent had been socialised to (Bourdieu, 1990). The subconscious adoption of the habitus was termed as doxa and the continued embodiment of the habitus was termed as hexis by Bourdieu (1984, 1992). Henceforth, using Bourdieu's sociological framework to analyse the British media reports of Eddie Jones' career trajectory as an Australian and the first foreign-born head coach to be appointed as the England men's national rugby team coach in 2015, permitted a theorisation of the narratives consumed within these reports.

Method

The database of Lexis Library was used to search for British newspaper articles. There were two phases of source selection. The first phase consisted of the full forename and surname used as the main search term (e.g. 'Eddie Jones'). Searches were specified to this term being located 'anywhere' in the article. The 'indexed terms' of only 'sports and athletics' and 'United Kingdom' options were selected. All print and online versions of UK newspapers were searched, covering national broadsheets and tabloids as well as regional/local newspapers. The 'high similarity' duplication option was selected to remove exact copies of articles that were

published in multiple sources. Articles published one week either side of the announcement for Jones' appointment were sourced (between 13th November 2015 and 27th November 2015). This timescale was deemed enough to include articles that in the build up to the announcement specifically reported on the potential appointment as well as those reflecting on the official announcement. The first phase returned a total of 691 articles.

The second selection phase consisted of only retaining articles that were more than 350 words and principally focused the content of the report on Jones' appointment. News articles of less than 350 words were deemed to provide insufficient data in which the notion of national identity was not detailed and is why they were discounted from selection. Articles that also simply referred to Jones as part of the story and which did not focus on his new role with the national team (e.g. as a spectator at a match or preparing their previous team for a match) were discounted as well. The second phase returned a total of 136 articles which were then used for analysis (see table 1).

[Insert table 1 here]

A deductive research methodology was applied. Data analysis was completed by recognising the concepts associated to Bourdieu's theoretical framework along with some of the additional concepts such as conditional acceptance which were highlighted by extant media analysis of foreign-born head coach appointments (i.e. Griggs and Gibbons, 2014; Skey, 2015). Thematic analysis was completed via open coding using the computer software NVivo 12. Each retained media report was coded. From this process 20 open codes were identified that included, amongst others: 'coach status,' 'personal life,' 'character description of individual' and 'perceived tactical style.' These open codes, or 'nodes,' described the characteristics of the raw data units. The open codes were then analysed further to identify similar characteristics, which, in turn, led to five sub-themes being identified. Comparisons and further critical reflection between sub-themes by way of continued analysis was then conducted. Here, shared

characteristics between sub-themes that resembled the latent meanings embedded within the data (Joffe and Yardley, 2004) were recognised and enabled the identification of higher-order themes. These shared characteristics and latent meanings were then linked to the concepts of Bourdieu's theoretical framework to conceptualise and theorise the media narratives embedded within the print media's articles. Ethical approval for a deskbound study was granted by a higher education ethics board.

Results and discussion

Three core themes were identified: 1) negativity – a loss of national identity; 2) positivity and a need for change; and 3) declinism and conditional acceptance - with the need for succession planning. Declinism was found to be the most prevalent theme with positivity being the least. The following section begins by discussing the theme of 'negativity and loss of national identity'. The discussion then concludes by discussing the most significant theme identified within the analysed articles of 'declinism and the need for succession planning'. Incorporated within this section is acknowledgment of the theme of 'positivity and a need for change' to illustrate the contrasting narratives presented by some journalists. Within this final section, the theme of 'positivity' is further analysed whereby a more malign and covert 'Little Englander' narrative was still recorded on account of Jones being positioned as an 'outsider' based on his perceived Australian habitus, limited embodied cultural and institutionalised social capital. Extracts from several articles have been drawn upon to illustrate how these themes were embedded within the media's narratives. When doing so, the newspaper names have been stated to indicate how national broadsheets perpetuated a covert and malign 'Little Englander' narrative in contrast to the tabloids and regional newspapers which had a more overt 'Little Englander' narrative.

Negativity – a loss of national identity

Articles against the appointment of a first foreign-born head coach were most present when published at the beginning of the search dates. These articles were considered 'inflamed defensive reactions' when speculating upon the prospect of Jones being appointed and when reporting soon after the official announcement of his appointment had been made. Although reference of other rugby union national teams and sports that had appointed foreign-born head coaches was provided, the arguments presented by those against Jones' appointment was because such an event was not a cultural norm in the delimited field of international men's English rugby union. Journalists in these cases exhibited insular and prejudicial 'Little Englander' attitudes in respect that appointing a foreign-born head coach would entail a loss of national identity through the "pluralization of national culture" (Maguire, 2011: 990). Sweeping claims of the RFU's appointment of Jones as a 'a foreign coach is an indignity for English rugby' were made along with other negative sentiments such as:

Should Eddie Jones take the job, then two of the three big England teams would be coached by Australians. Trevor Bayliss already presides over English cricket. There is nothing parochial about recognising the absurdity of such an arrangement. (*Wales Online*, November 19)

Additional latent meanings that underpinned these claims suggested Jones was not seen to embody general English values, neither would he encourage the players to implement playing strategies aligned to perceived English traditions. These arguments were based on how Jones had not been fully socialised into the broader, overarching field of English society but also the delimited field of English rugby union. For example, the former England 2003 rugby union World Cup winning coach, Sir Clive Woodward was one of the few advocates of Eddie Jones' appointment, but questioned the link between a coach's nationality and the assumed link to outputs of team playing style and performances when writing in the *Daily Mail*:

The identity of a team is a big lesson to learn from the World Cup. Argentina, Australia and New Zealand are the best case studies in how a nation's identity

can be woven into an effective game plan and it's worth noting that all had *one of their own* as coach. (added emphasis, November 20)

The significance placed on “one of their own” is important as it indicated head coaches being perceived to embody appropriate field specific values and dispositions pertaining to coaching and playing strategies at a club level. Indeed, this has been reported by Blackett et al. (2017) when examining the coach development and recruitment process of elite football and rugby club directors in England. Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of habitus and embodied cultural capital enabled the authors to theorise how shared cultural values and dispositions were subjectively valorised by club directors when making judgements on which candidates were deemed compatible with the club and its culture. When these values were not compatible, ‘symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) was imposed by rejecting these applicants. Here, similar sentiments were expressed by journalists and commentators as much of the latent meanings that underscored their perceptions of Jones as the new foreign-born head coach were based on him not embodying the same shared values of the team and the populous of the supporting nation.

In the context of the present study, much of the journalists' animosity was framed around the perceived habitus of a foreign-born head coach contrasting to that of the players and the habitus associated to English rugby union's cultural field (see also Maguire and Poulton, 1999). This extract published in *The Times* (November 20) illustrates such a view: “Use of the word ‘culture’ is one of those favourable terms of the moment, but it is fair to say that there is a cultural chasm between Jones and the English sporting way”.

Based on perceived differences between an English culture and Jones' own dispositions that constituted towards his perceived habitus, journalists inferred to Jones as an ‘outsider’ when comparing him to preferred ‘home grown’ or ‘insider’ candidates whose identities were described as ‘one of our own.’ The binary narratives of positioning Jones as an ‘outsider’ over

preferred candidates seen as 'insiders,' inferred to Jones' inability to assimilate with the cultural norms of the English sporting way of rugby union. Such framing by the British written media when reporting on Jones' appointment further perpetuated the overt and covert 'Little Englander' ideology. The below quotes were examples of many articles that were framed in such a way. The first quote published in *The Observer* referred to other non-English candidates (Jake White and Michael Cheika) who were allegedly also considered for the post, whilst the second extract published in *The Yorkshire Post* lists alternative English candidates:

To coach England you have to know the culture and the lack of trust in England. With all respect to White and Jones and Cheika - eminent international coaches all - this is a job for an English coach. (*The Observer*, November 14)

Just because Lancaster did not get it right when it mattered most, does not mean another English coach or a shrewd operator currently plying his trade in the Premiership, will also fall short on the biggest stage. Lancaster did a lot of good for English rugby. He succeeded in reconnecting the national team with its fanbase and grassroots rugby, and vice-versa. He made players humbled by the shirt, and restored pride from the Twickenham terraces after the public fallout from the 2011 World Cup campaign. He blooded a host of young players who may still succeed with England, and in that, Lancaster's legacy may not be fulfilled until 2019 or even beyond... But the foundations he lay deserve to be built upon by a fellow Englishman. To only look abroad for alternatives is an insult to the likes of Jim Mallinder, Rob Baxter, Dean Ryan and Richard Cockerill in particular, four English coaches doing a sterling job at their clubs. (*The Yorkshire Post*, November 13)

This type of viewpoint led to these articles espousing malign nationalistic and patriotic attitudes that turned to xenophobic outbursts when debating the ills of appointing 'outsider' foreign-born head coaches. To further evidence this binary insider-outsider relation, perceived differences between Jones' habitus as an Australian and the accepted values of English rugby union (i.e. the "cultural chasm"), one article published in *The Times* questioned Jones' ability to instill these values compared to how his predecessor, the Englishman Stuart Lancaster had:

You wonder, too, about values and culture, the very aspects upon which Lancaster was so strong. The Lancaster years were about redefining Englishness and loyalty to the shirt. How does the national team's first paid foreign head coach deal with that? (November 20)

For Jones to be perceived as effective in the role and thus be accepted, he was required to exhibit the appropriate habitus, ideally one that reflected the habitus of English rugby union's field. Indeed, within coach education studies, Cushion and Jones (2014) have detailed the significance of coaches having been socialised to what they detailed as a 'hidden curriculum' of cultural ideologies so that the respective field's legitimised orthodoxy was subconsciously embodied and in turn culturally reproduced. Cultural reproduction was a significant theme embedded within the media's narrative of Jones' appointment and framed through the topic of succession planning. This contributes to the next theme of 'declinism and conditional acceptance' which the following section discusses further.

Declinism and conditional acceptance – importance of succession planning

Jones' predecessor, Stuart Lancaster, had left their post because of poor on-field performances and results. Subsequently, the overarching narrative presented by the media was one of Jones entering a 'crisis.' Consumed within some articles which framed their narratives on the theme declinism was the notion that Jones' appointment would enable on-field performance to be improved. Consequently, there was some acceptance and positive sentiments towards Jones' appointment, as indicated by the below extract published in *The Sunday Times*:

Many people wanted an England-born coach, some of them were people for whom I have a massive respect. Well, if they will allow a personal note here, I am fed up to the back teeth writing the same story of England coaches failing to win no Grand Slams in 12 years, and trying to claim some form of success when finishing midtable in rubbish years. England deserve so much better and can worry about nationality another time. Not now for goodness sake. (November 22)

The above extract is illustrative of the antipathy journalists wrote of in respect of poor performances and results. Whilst noting some positivity towards Jones having the capacity to potentially improve the team's on-field performances and results, there was still the re-occurring theme of 'declinism' throughout most articles. Declinism represents a form of national antipathy of nostalgically believing that yesteryear was more prosperous and that

current or prospective national prosperity is at a state of decay (Lake, 2017; Porter, 2004).

Terms such as “SOS,” “debris” and “messiah” were used to perpetuate this notion of declinism:

The SOS calls could have been heard as far away as South Africa as Ian Ritchie flew out to Jones’s Cape Town hotel to tempt him over to England to save English rugby. Barely 12 hours into the job last weekend, Jones, the self-confessed workaholic, will have put his feet up in front of the fire to watch a weekend of European rugby action from the Champions Cup. A blank sheet of paper in his hand, a pen in the other, he must have been thinking about how he was going to pick his way through the debris (*The Telegraph*, November 27).

Jones has quickly become the next messiah of England international rugby (*The Times*, November 20).

Attaining the role of national team head coach was seen to be the pinnacle within the field of men’s rugby union. Yet, at the same time, an admission was regularly made that the men’s national team and the RFU had fallen behind their sporting rivals: “For 12 years, under-achieving has become the norm” (*The Telegraph*, November 20). Other articles were less subtle in their views of how the team and the RFU as the sport’s governing body had declined:

The Rugby Football Union is saying little but finding someone vaguely interested has not been entirely straightforward. In theory it should be easy: advertise a job with a salary of hundreds of thousands of pounds then just sit back and wait for top-quality candidates to crawl to your door over broken glass, or whatever else is lying on the damp, wintry streets of Twickenham. Not so for the RFU which, with one or two notable exceptions, has yet to be flooded with positive responses. (*The Guardian*, November 17)

As the above extract indicates, the notion of declinism was not solely centred on poor team performances and results. Importantly, declinism seemed to extend beyond on-field team performances and results, but also to the administration of the sport by its governing body, the RFU. The inability of the RFU to produce ‘home-grown’ coaches worthy of consideration from ‘their own’ coach education structures significantly laced the narratives.

Although it will solve the immediate problem - fill the experience gap - hiring a coach from New Zealand, Australia or South Africa will qualify as an indignity - and point to a failure in coach development. International sport, after all, is meant to be the players, coaches and fans of Country A against the players, coaches and fans of Country B. (*Wales Online*, November 19)

The small reservoir of suitable 'home-grown' English candidates available for consideration was a discussion point that dominated each case. This was a sub-theme contributing to the declinism theme as it was deemed that the NGBs inability to develop their own 'home-grown' coaches also equated to a form of neglect. A former England and Lions coach, Dick Best was quoted in *The London Evening Standard* to have said:

This was inevitable because there has been no succession planning for England coaches. We haven't put in place the support structures for previous coaches and the RFU needs a strong performance director to help Eddie. He is a coach not a politician. I like Eddie a lot but who is developing the next English coach? (November 20)

When reporting on Jones' appointment, *The Guardian* quoted former Australian international rugby player David Campese on how the appointment indicated a poorly implemented coach education system:

The whole idea about rugby is that you get people who play for your country, who come through the system and you want them to come through to the national job and pass on their experience. It just looks like that you guys have no idea what you are doing. Where is your structure? Where are your young coaches who want to be the best in the world? It looks [like] you are desperate, and you just go out and pay the money for somebody who you think will help you. (November 19)

Further reinforcing the binary 'insider' versus 'outsider' positioning of Jones, many reports discussed the value and need of having an English team of coaches that supported the new incumbent. Conditional acceptance was attributed to Jones if he associated himself with English coaches to support him in his head coach duties. As 'insiders,' English coaches were judged to have been socialised to the cultural norms of the men's English rugby union field, and, in turn, had potentially acquired the legitimised habitus commensurate with this cultural field in which he was entering. Doing so would enable Jones to accumulate institutionalised social capital which could then be transferred into institutionalised and embodied cultural capital. This would then equate to the media bestowing increased levels of embodied symbolic capital and thus acceptance, albeit conditional acceptance. The first line of an article in *The*

Guardian illustrated this: "Eddie Jones' first job is to assemble a coaching panel and he will feel some pressure to go English." The frequency of similar titles inferred to a form of temporal conditional acceptance that was not solely based on Jones achieving positive on-field results but also determined by the identities of who Jones appointed and surrounded himself with as support and specialist coaches.

Moreover, this form of temporal conditional acceptance of Jones was further based on whether the RFU board members indicated that they had a clearly marked succession strategy of having an English coach in place to succeed Jones. The below extract from an article in *The Times* indicates this temporality of conditional acceptance further:

The nationality issue is no longer such a febrile, polarising topic. Football has long been there. Cricket has crossed the Rubicon. What matters for English rugby is that it gets its succession planning in order, not that it rails against Jones being an Aussie. In truth, he is a practitioner in the global market place...
(November 20)

Whilst seemingly accepting Jones' appointment, the same article proceeds to list all the potential English coaches earmarked as successors, furthering the notion of temporal and conditional acceptance on the basis that one of these 'insider' and 'home-grown' coaches succeed Jones:

It is important that there is an English flavour among the management team, be it the incumbents Andy Farrell, Graham Rowntree and Mike Catt or new blood - Steve Borthwick, Paul Gustard, Sanderson. Ideally, the likes of Rob Baxter or Dean Ryan would be tempted to come on board to become the next in line.
(November 20)

In such a light, what may seem on the surface to be an accepting and less malign narrative of openness towards multiculturalism for the appointment of Eddie Jones, can instead be judged as a covert form of discrimination based on nationality. Indeed, journalists' centring the focus on the need to have 'home-grown,' 'insider' coaches to support Jones indicates to the presence of a more malign and covert form of symbolic violence in the guise of a xenophobic

'Little Englander' attitude, which has, hitherto, not been identified by extant analyses in this area.

Conclusion

By extending the line of analysis previously initiated by Skey (2015) as well as Griggs and Gibbons (2014), the present article adds insight as to why journalists initially rejected the appointment of a foreign-born head coach to the men's England national rugby union team. Bourdieu's praxeology and the concepts of capital, habitus and field associated to it have been shown in this instance to be applicable in conceptualising the British written media's latent narratives. The intersection of Eddie Jones' perceived identity and his prospective practice as head coach was a significant theme in the media's narratives. This is to say, Jones' assumed habitus as an Australian was viewed to impair his ability to effectively practice and fulfil his role as coach because his perceived values and practices would not cohere with the cultural field of English men's rugby union. This supposed inability to embody a shared habitus was foreseen to restrict Jones' capacity to relate with the other agents associated to the delimited field, such as the spectators, the media and significantly the athletes representing the men's English national rugby union team. Based on this, Jones was therefore pre-judged to be ineffective in his role. This was a significant theme as assumptions of cultural differences were made, positioning Jones as an 'outsider' based on his reduced embodied cultural capital within men's English rugby union. These narratives underpinned the predominant view that Jones would be ineffective in the role and indicate how overt and covert discriminatory narratives towards Jones, based on his nationality, were recorded. Indeed, Jones' perceived inability to assimilate with or even embody English cultural values furthered the malign narrative of him initially being rejected and thus facilitated the 'Little Englander' narrative.

The current study has also shown how there was some reporting that on the surface seemed to present a more accepting, benign and inclusive narrative towards Jones' appointment. This seemed at first to contrast with the work of others when analysing similar instances of foreign-born national coaches appointed in English men's football (Griggs and Gibbons, 2014; Skey, 2015). Nevertheless, the recorded sentiments of declinism and the need for succession planning inferred to a continued 'Little Englander' attitude, albeit one in the guise of a more malign and covert form. Indeed, such a subtly malign form of discrimination has not previously been reported and consequently shows a continued presence of binary 'one of our own, home-grown us/insider' and 'outsider/them' narratives. The media's focus by drawing attention to the significance of Jones appointing 'insider' English coaches to support him, indicates the importance of institutionalised social capital that can also aid in the accumulation of institutionalised and embodied cultural capital. Nevertheless, although such reporting is not overtly racist, the sentiments of categorising Jones as an 'outsider' inferred to malign and covert forms of Bourdieu's symbolic violence that contrasts with the progressive change found within English cricket regarding more tolerant and benign forms of Englishness present in the early parts of the twenty-first century compared to the latter parts of the twentieth century (Malcolm, 2009).

Most of the journalists' malign narratives were sourced from articles published in broadsheets compared to the more overt narratives identified within tabloids and regional newspapers. This infers to the potential class-based differences between how the broadsheets report such appointments in rugby union versus those reporting and discussing foreign-born head coach appointments in football by the 'red-top' tabloids. The results of this study indicate that rather than the broadsheets being more accepting towards the immigration of head coaches, there is still an ever-present form of nationalism, one that is more malign and covert.

Given there was greater opposition to Jones' appointment at the beginning of the search dates and that such negativity softened as time elapsed after his official appointment, prompts recommendations for further research in this area would benefit from continued longitudinal analyses over the complete duration of foreign-born coaches' tenures. Such an approach can enable temporality to be considered to a greater degree, allowing analysis on whether negative media narratives are sustained and how these appointments effect the perception of English national identity throughout the time such individuals are in post (Biscomb and Matheson, 2019). The deductive research methodology of this study is acknowledged as a limitation. Continued research in this area may benefit from employing inductive approaches that enable a critical comparison between theories which can conceptualise other latent themes related to the phenomena of foreign-born head coaching appointments. Finally, evaluating how the written media with right, left or centrist political ideologies report upon these events and the topic of nationality through other methodologies, such as discourse analysis, can offer further insight for the mechanisms which can frame the media's narratives.

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