



Coaches' Immigration to the United Kingdom: What do Foreign and Native Coaches think about migration

Inmigración de entrenadores en el Reino Unido: ¿Qué opinan los entrenadores extranjeros y nativos sobre la migración?

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Key words

- Sport
- Transnationalism
- Cultural training
- Brain exchange
- Coaches' careers

Abstract

Coaches' migration has received limited attention. It is important to explore their migration experiences and how native coaches perceive coaches' migration because they might have different views on this topic. The current research aims to investigate a) the perceptions of migrant coaches regarding their experiences in a host country and b) the perceptions of native coaches regarding coaches' migration to the UK. A qualitative thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the data and MAXQDA 11 software was used to facilitate this process. In total, 15 participants residing in the UK were invited to participate through convenience sampling. An online open-ended questionnaire was completed by ten immigrant coaches (six females, four males) with ages ranging from 19 to 44 years (mean = 30.7; SD = 9.04), and interviews were conducted with five British native coaches (four males and one female) with ages ranging from 20 to 40 years (mean = 30.5; SD = 9.15). We found that coaches' transnational recruitment was mainly influenced by social networks. Immigrant coaches were motivated to migrate to the UK to work full-time in their sport. They reported some

Palabra clave

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- Transnacionalismo
- Formación cultural
- Intercambio de cerebros
- Carreras de entrenadores

language and communication challenges in their adaptation and suggested training for migration purposes would have been useful. UK-native coaches defined coaches' immigration as positive for the UK sports development and the exchange of knowledge and skills in the sport. However, they also identified barriers imposed on immigrant coaches such as other coaches' negative views about immigration and protectionist measures from the UK sports federations.

Resumen

La migración de entrenadores ha recibido una atención limitada. Es importante explorar sus experiencias de migración y cómo los entrenadores nativos perciben la migración de los entrenadores, porque pueden tener puntos de vista diferentes sobre este tema. La investigación actual tiene como objetivo investigar a) las percepciones de los entrenadores inmigrantes con respecto a sus experiencias en un país anfitrión y b) las percepciones de los entrenadores nativos con respecto a la migración de entrenadores al Reino Unido. Se adoptó un análisis temático cualitativo para analizar los datos y se utilizó el software MAXQDA 11 para facilitar este proceso. En total, se invitó a participar a 15 participantes que residían en el Reino Unido, a través de un muestreo intencional. Diez entrenadores inmigrantes (seis mujeres, cuatro hombres) con edades que oscilaban entre los 19 y los 44 años (media = 30,7; SD = 9,04) completaron un cuestionario abierto en línea, y se realizaron entrevistas con cinco entrenadores nativos británicos (cuatro hombres y una mujer) con edades entre 20 y 40 años (media = 30,5; SD = 9,15). Encontramos que el reclutamiento transnacional de entrenadores estuvo influenciado principalmente por las redes sociales. Los entrenadores inmigrantes estaban motivados para emigrar al Reino Unido para trabajar a tiempo completo en su deporte. Informaron sobre algunos desafíos de lenguaje y comunicación en su adaptación y sugirieron que la capacitación para propósitos de migración hubiera sido útil. Los entrenadores nativos de Reino Unido definieron la inmigración de entrenadores como positiva para el desarrollo deportivo del país y el intercambio de conocimientos y habilidades en el deporte. Sin embargo, también identificaron las barreras impuestas a los entrenadores inmigrantes, como las opiniones negativas de otros entrenadores sobre la inmigración y las medidas proteccionistas de las federaciones deportivas del Reino Unido.

Introducción

Sport and exercise migration is part of the flow of workers in the United Kingdom (Elliott and Weedon, 2010). Previous studies have focused on athletes' migration, with particular attention to sports professionals (Agergaard 2008; Agergaard, and Botelho 2013; Agergaard and Ryba 2014; Marques and Marchi 2021; Stead and Maguire 2000). Less attention has been given to the phenomenon of sport and exercise coaches' migration. It is important to analyse this phenomenon because we know that migrant sports coaches view themselves as crucial to the sport's development of the host countries and contributing to the native players and coaches' improvement (Borges, Rosado, de Oliveira and Freitas 2015). We also know that this view is not always shared by native stakeholders, such as the native media (Griggs and Gibbons 2014; Vincent et al. 2010) and local fans (Falcous and Maguire 2005). These different perspectives require further analysis to better understand coaches' migration.

Migration is currently a hot topic with considerable media discourse dedicated to reporting migration unfavourably (e.g. Brexit, refugees' crises) and this might impact how sports migrants are viewed. Sports media is often negative in relation to foreign coaches, relating migration to poor sports development in the host countries (Griggs and Gibbons 2014). Foreign coaches have been perceived as those taking up national jobs. This stigmatisation of foreign coaches might have consequences on sports policies. For instance, a protectionist policy favouring Russian-native coaches was ordered by the Russian Ministry of Sport on 21 September 2015, which excludes foreign coaches to lead Russian football clubs. Thus, it is important to understand how native and foreign coaches view the immigration of sport and exercise coaches. This can impact how people view them according to their nationality. Coaches need to be aware of these views so they can make informed decisions on their careers.

The theoretical framework used in the present study is the Socio-psychological Model of Transitions in Transnational Athletic Career developed by Agergaard and Ryba (2014). We adapted the model to the context of sport and exercise coaches' careers and focus on two of the three stages of the model: "transnational recruitment" and "establishment as a transnational". For this study, we did not use the "career termination" stage as all coaches were still active. Transnational recruitment includes all the individual and social aspects that allows the coach to start the migration process. The individual aspects relate to the coping strategies and factors that can motivate them to migrate or to remain in their native country. Fac-

tors that motivate the coaches to migrate can be their ambition for personal and professional development (Borges et al. 2015) as well as economic factors (income, contract length), family factors (children), and cultural and geographic factors (language, flight duration; Orłowski, Wicker and Breuer 2016). Decisions to migrate are facilitated by a permanent professional contract with a prospect of higher income, having a long-term personal relationship, and speaking a foreign language (Wicker, Orłowski and Breuer 2018). The social aspects include the local and transnational relations, as well as the networks of power which are crucial for migration (Borges et al. 2015; Orłowski, Wicker and Breuer 2016; Orłowski, Wicker and Breuer 2018). Migrant coaches are often hired following a recommendation from other coaches within their relations (Borges, et al. 2015). The local relations normally start in clubs and national federations and the transnational relations can result from international competitions which allow for the interaction with foreign coaches (Orłowski, Wicker and Breuer 2018). In this study, we wanted to explore the views of sport and exercise coaches about their own migration, particularly their personal and professional motivations and challenges when immigrating to the UK.

The establishment as a transnational coach relates to the process of adapting to a new socio-cultural context while maintaining social connections with the native country. The latter is important for sports migrants as they keep in contact with their family and friends from their native countries, as well as friends from the countries they move through (Agergaard and Ryba 2014) for instance via social media (e.g., Facebook, Skype). Regarding the adaptations to the new country, these can be related to the sporting and cultural contexts (Borges, et al. 2015; Samuel, Eldadi, Galily and Tenenbaum 2021). The sporting adaptations are those that coaches need to do in their training programmes, for instance, gymnastics coaches from the former Soviet Union who migrated to New Zealand said they changed their coaching style (Kerr and Moore 2015). Coaches who immigrated to Canada also found differences in athletes' commitment and the coach's status and recognition (Schinke et al. 2015). The cultural adaptations can be linked to communication and language aspects. For instance, coaches might adapt more easily if they speak the language of the host country or if they speak a common language like English (Borges et al. 2015) but there are challenges in the integration process often linked with cultural values and norms (Battochio et al. 2013; Schinke et al. 2011). The transition to a new country should not be seen as a simple process of assimilating to a new cultural context, but also as an

exchange process through which sports migrants and sports natives develop a transnational sense of belonging (Agergaard and Ryba 2014). In this connection, we wanted to explore the views and experiences of immigrant and native coaches regarding the mutual exchange of knowledge and practices (aka brain-exchange) in their sport or exercise.

The concept of "brain-exchange" is based on the increased circulation and exchange of skills globally (Elliott and Weedon 2010; see Beaverstock 2005). For example, elite coaches in football are increasingly circulating between countries because of career contingencies, like short contract lengths, but also because elite clubs are looking for coaches with international experience who are familiar with a range of playing styles, strategies, and organisational cultures (Smith 2016). These could be considered beneficial for sports development, but foreign coaches often face hostile media in their host countries; being portrayed as incompetent to represent national teams while native coaches are portrayed as proudly patriotic (Griggs and Gibbons 2014; Vincent et al. 2010). The media reproduction of these stereotypes may have consequences on how native coaches view immigration and may have consequences at different levels of the sport and exercise spectrum of professionals. Another interesting point is that previous studies have looked at the coaches' migration phenomenon as "brain drain" (Orlowski, Wicker and Breuer 2016), or a deskilling of the coaches from the donor country. The authors interviewed nine Olympic sports coaches to examine the potential migration factors for German coaches. They identified "push" and "pull" factors (associated with the donor and host countries, respectively) and concluded that both influenced the coaches' decision to migrate, impacting the "brain drain" of the German sports system. Although outside the direct scope of this study it is important to also recognise the broader social context of sport coaches' immigration which involves labour inequalities, difficulties with social integration, and access to social and health protection among others (Carter, 2011).

The present study aims to explore two questions: 1) What are the views and experiences of sport and exercise coaches about their own migration, particularly their personal and professional motivations and challenges when immigrating to the UK; and 2) What are the views and experiences of immigrant and native coaches regarding the mutual exchange of knowledge and practices in their sport. It was expected that migrant coaches view their experiences as important for their professional development and for the sport's development of their host country (Borges, Rosado, de Oliveira, and Freitas 2015); and native coaches

view coaches' migration as part an issue for the development of the sport and impacting on the native coaches' opportunities to work in the UK (Griggs and Gibbons 2014; Vincent, Kian, Pedersen, Kuntz, and Hill 2010). Therefore, we hypothesise that migrant coaches and native coaches have different views in relation to coaches' migration.

Methods

Participants

In total, 15 participants residing in the UK were invited to participate through convenience sampling. In recruiting participants we sought diversity in gender, age, activity and experience. Ten immigrant coaches completed an online open-ended questionnaire and five British native coaches completed interviews. The participating coaches who immigrated to the UK were six females and four males, aged between 19 and 44 years (mean = 30.7; SD = 9.04) from Italy, Spain, Croatia, Bulgaria and Brazil. They worked in established sport or exercise settings and coached in national or local sport teams or local exercise clubs (tennis, boxing, rhythmic gymnastics, yoga, ice skating, aqua gym, dance, and football). Their coaching experience varied between 1 and 7 years. The majority of the immigrant coaches were in their first international migration ($n = 7$), had never worked in their native country before ($n = 6$) and had migrated to the UK without their families ($n = 8$). They saw themselves settling in the UK ($n = 8$) and returning to their native country ($n = 6$), but not migrating to another country ($n = 6$). The four immigrant coaches who had worked in their native country before, felt there were no sport or cultural differences between the two countries. None of the coaches attended any type of cultural training ($n = 10$) and only some of them ($n = 4$), considered this type of training important in the context of migration.

The British coaches worked in established sport settings. In recruiting participants we sought to include sports which are under-developed in the UK because previous studies found that foreign coaches are often recruited to develop the sport in the host country (Borges et al. 2015; Kerr and Moore 2015). Participants were four male and one female, aged between 20 and 40 years (mean = 30.5; SD = 9.15). They coached in national or local sport teams in the following sports: roller figure skating, volleyball, roller speed skating and rhythmic gymnastics. One coach was at the start of their career and four were experienced coaches with 21 or 25 years of experience. None of the English coaches had migrated or coached abroad. Ethics approval was obtained from the University Ethics Panel.

Data collection

For the British coaches, a semi-structured interview was used which included introductory questions about the coaches' background (e.g., age, coaching experience), and questions about their views on sports migration and immigrant coaches' impact on the UK sporting system. All the interviews were conducted face to face and audio recorded. For the immigrant coaches, an online questionnaire was used which included closed and open-ended questions. By using a questionnaire we hoped that participants would make themselves available to reflect about their life experiences, while also "giving voice" to coaches who might abstain from participating in face-to-face research due to language concerns (Braun, Clarke, Boulton, Davey and McEvoy 2020). For instance, some coaches might make use of online translation services to find the right words to express themselves.

The survey included 32 demographic and topic-based questions. The topic-questions were about the recruitment process (e.g., who contacted you?), motivations to migrate (e.g., what was the main motivation to migrate to the UK?), and migration experiences (e.g., how has your overall experience been so far?). Two researchers qualified in sports and with migration experience evaluated the survey to determine if the questions were relevant and clear. Based on their comments 6 questions were added which related to the importance of cultural training in coaches' migration (e.g., which topics and issues do you think the training should cover?). The final version of the survey included 38 questions and it was made available online to the participants. The information sheet and the consent form were added in the first section of the survey.

Data analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted based on the six steps proposed by Braun and Clark (2006) for both immigrant and British coaches. We choose this method of analysis because we aimed to identify patterns within the data concerning views of immigrant coaches and native coaches about sports migration. We used MAXQDA 11 software to manage and organise the data. First, to get familiarised and immersed with the data, we read all the open-ended answers to the surveys as well as the interview transcripts. Second, the data were coded deductively for immigrant coaches and inductively for British coaches (Sparkes and Smith 2014). A deductive approach was used for the immigrant coaches by aligning the code groups with the Socio-Psycholog-

ical Model of Transitions in Transnational Athletic Career (Agergaard and Ryba 2014). We used two of the three stages of the model: "transnational recruitment" and "establishment as a transnational" as code groups. An inductive approach was used for the British coaches, and we coded the raw quotes in relation to their views on coaches' immigration to the UK. Third, we analyzed both data sets to identify the themes and subthemes based on the codes. A thematic map was created to help with this analysis. Fourth, the themes and subthemes were reviewed, resulting in two themes and six subthemes for immigrant coaches' data, and three themes for the British coaches' data. Fifth, after defining the key themes and master themes, we identified subthemes that were useful to structure the larger master themes. Sixth, we wrote the manuscript by using the quotations from the coaches and relating the data to the literature on sports migration. We created Figure 1, to provide a visual representation of our results in line with the Socio-Psychological Model of Transitions in Transnational Athletic Career (Agergaard and Ryba 2014). For this data analysis, we used triangulation among the research team using critical dialogue to ensure the reliability of the process (Sparks and Smith 2014). We followed an iterative process, with continued enhancements based on the discussions among the research team, to identify both the immigrant and native coaches' views on coaches' migration.

Researcher's position and research quality

The researcher's position was to "studying the familiar" (Berger 2015). All the authors are migrants and needed to adapt to a new cultural context in a non-native language. All authors have coaching experience in their native country and/or abroad. Their experiences influenced the study design and data analysis process. Two authors had researched coaches' migration previously, which provided them with important knowledge about the topic. Their familiarity with the topic helped with the development of the survey, taking into consideration potential sensibilities related to the migration process. The authors were conscious of their values, beliefs and perceptions about the topic and for this reason constantly engaged in self-reflexivity to avoid taking for granted or overlooking aspects of the data. In this study, we adopted a relativist stance and followed Tracy (2010) eight criteria, to guide the quality of the process and results: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical and meaningful coherence.

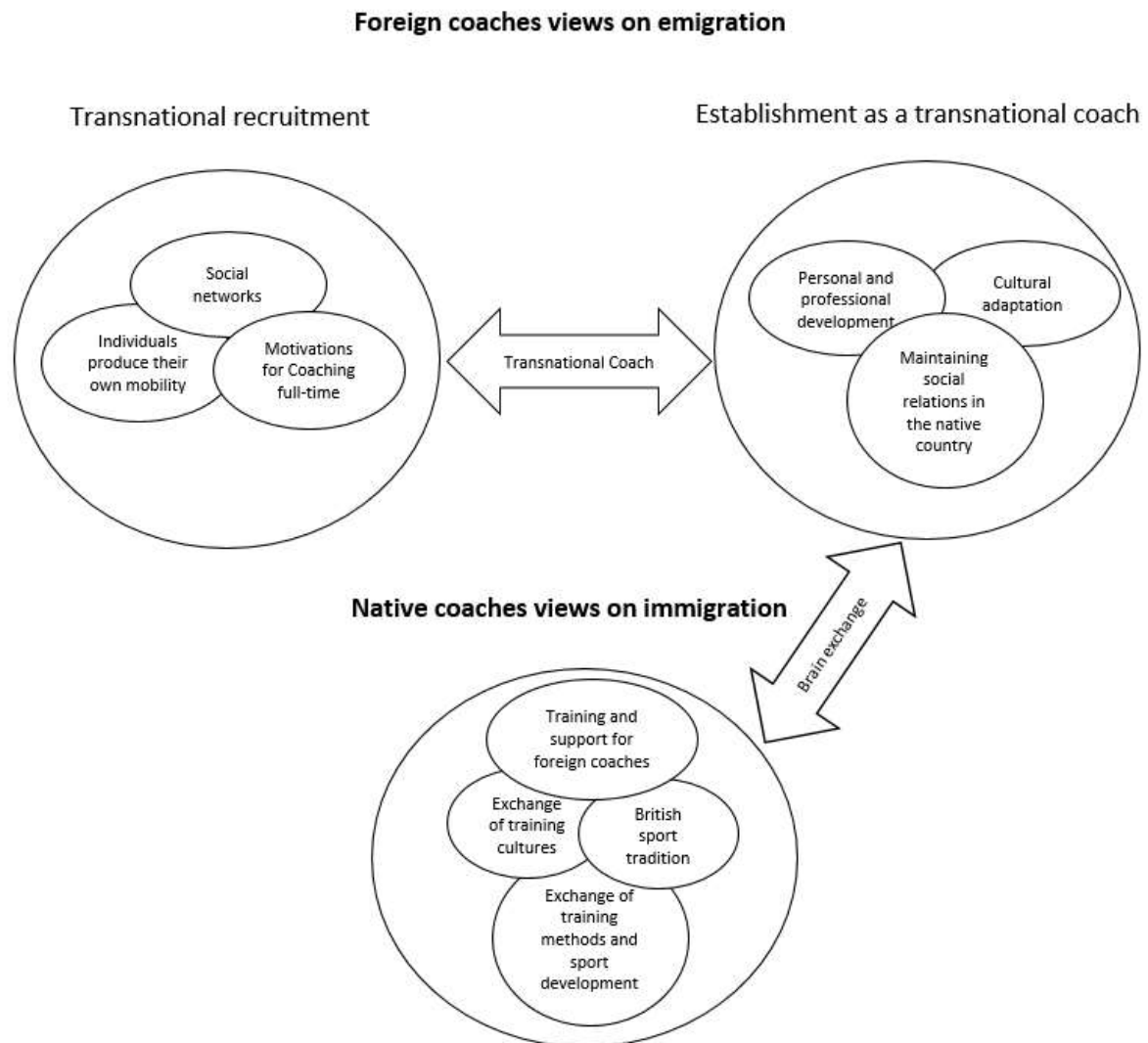


Figure 1. Adaptation of the Sociopsychological Model of Transitions in Transnational Athletic Career (Agergaard and Ryba 2014) to the coaches' transnational career and based on the views of foreign and native coaches about migration.

Results and discussion

The views of immigrant coaches about their immigration to the UK

Two main themes were drawn from the Socio-Psychological Model, and six sub-themes emerged from the thematic analysis. The first theme "Transnational recruitment" refers to the individual and social aspects that allow the coach to start the migration process. This theme included the sub-themes "social networks" and "individuals produce their own mobility". The second theme "Establishment as a transnational coach" is related to the process of adaptation to a new so-

cio-cultural context and the maintenance of social connections with the native country. This theme included the sub-themes "cultural adaptation", "personal and professional development", "coaching full-time" and "maintaining social relations in the native country".

Transnational recruitment

Social networks

Social networks are related to the interdependencies that exist between the coach and other sports stakeholders (e.g., coaches, athletes), which are used

to produce transnational recruitment (Agergaard and Ryba 2014). The coaches used social sports contacts to get information about life in the host country and to initiate their recruitment process. By having social and professional contacts they are creating opportunities for being recruited to work in their sport (cf., Orłowski, Wicker and Breuer 2016). Social and professional networks were crucial to transnational recruitment as mentioned by all participants. For example, P3 and P10 said they had previous connections with the person who hired them and P7 was hired by the club manager, after personal contact.

(...) my lecturer provided me with the contact. After graduation, I was contacted by the club manager. They were happy to have me working as an assistant coach. (P7)

These personal contacts can be extended by participating in international competitions:

I used to coach boxing in Spain. Two years ago I came to the UK for a competition and a friend of mine, an English coach, asked me if I wanted to start working for his club. And I accepted. (P3)

And can also be external to the sport context, as mentioned by one of the coaches:

A friend of mine. She used to be my landlady, she is the director of the dance studio where I work. She knew I was an elite ice skater, and national-level coach. She asked me if I had ever made choreographies in my sport. I used to coach skating in my country, I made so many choreographies for several skaters, so I gave a try in dancing. (P13)

These findings suggest that social networks were crucial to the transnational recruitment of these participants. Previous studies showed similar findings when exploring the international recruitment of football and handball coaches (Borges et al. 2015). These networks resulted from contacts within and outside sport and exercise. The selected sports for this study were underdeveloped in the UK which may explain why coaches were not recruited through an agent, as also found in previous studies with female athletes (Agergaard and Botelho 2010; Agergaard and Ryba 2014).

Individuals produce their own mobility

In some cases, participants produced their transnational mobility by initiating and maintaining their

social and professional relations. For instance, P5, P6, and P8 initiated their own transfers. P5 sent her CV to the club's manager and went through a 1-week trial before being hired. P8 applied for the job and interviewed with the manager before being recruited. P6 took a serendipitous opportunity:

I moved to the UK, I joined a local gym which has the swimming pool as well. The gym was looking for an acquagym instructor. I used to be an acquagym instructor in Italy, so then I gave my CV to a personal trainer of that gym and was contacted by the manager of the gym, I did a week trial and I got the job. (P6)

It is highlighted here that not only the social networks are relevant but also the coaches were able to develop relations and negotiate their recruitment. This means that we also need to take into consideration the role of agency that coaches have in this process, and that this should be combined with their dynamic social networks (Agergaard and Ryba 2014).

Establishment as a transnational coach

Cultural adaptation

Cultural adaptation is part of the establishment of coaches in the host country related to the adjustments they needed to take, to adapt to the new cultural context. Culturally adapting to the UK demonstrated a process of adjustment that included some factors that could be challenging for the immigrant coaches, as identified in previous studies (Borges et al. 2015; Samuel et al. 2021). Some participants mentioned professional challenges related to communication and language not just in general but also regarding professional terminology.

I was feeling uncomfortable to work with English athletes and coaches knowing that my English level was basic. They [other coaches and athletes] have never helped me with improving my pronunciation or accent. Sometimes I felt that even they were uncomfortable with this language difference. (P4)

As mentioned above, some participants did not feel supported by their colleagues or athletes in their adaptation to the new cultural context. The findings support the need for an "immersed reciprocity" in relation to the cultural adaptation of immigrant coaches. Previous studies with immigrant athletes suggest that both immigrants and host country natives should

take into account an equal responsibility for this process (Schinke and McGannon 2014). The authors referred that this could help with the positive adjustment of the immigrants. Other coaches mentioned the useful help from people they worked with.

My English was quite good. Even though it was not professionally correct. It took me a while to learn all the correct terminologies of my sport. My athletes, the club, the other coaches helped me. (P1).

Although their overall migration experience was positive some coaches reported issues with their adaptation to the new culture. As P5 mentioned: "(...) it was hard at the beginning but it turned out to be the most pleasant experience of my life". The challenges were mainly related to the start of their relocation. Namely, differences in culture, weather, accommodation and lifestyle. For instance, P4 and P7 who immigrated to London said that the city was expensive and stressful.

London and its lifestyle are expensive (...) here I spend more than half my monthly salary in accommodation and personal expenses. (P4)

London is a stressful city (...) I barely meet people. Most of the people I met left the city as they could not see themselves living here forever... (P7)

In order to help with adaptation, coaches suggested strategies to overcome the challenges. Some coaches agreed that specific training for migration purposes would be very important for their adjustment to the host country. Previous studies found that training-abroad programs could be very successful for the cultural transition of the coaches to the host country culture (Samuel et al., 2021). For example, P2 mentioned that: "(...) I found myself totally lost in the first months. I believe a training course would be really helpful". Participants suggested such training should include: "host country traditions, rules and financing" (P3) and be available online before migration to facilitate adaptation to the new cultural context. Another participant thought migration was a personal journey that requires no training.

I don't think it is important to have these training courses. I think that migration is something personal. There are no rules of how to prepare yourself to migrate... (P5)

The participants who identified no training needs may lack cultural knowledge and not be aware of

their limitations, in what Fischer (2011) called "unconscious incompetence". In sum, cultural differences were a challenge for the adaptation of coaches. The language was one of the challenges similar to what is known from migrant athletes (Agergaard and Ryba 2014), but also the weather, food, and lifestyle were mentioned in the present study, similarly to previous studies with handball (Samuel et al. 2021) and football coaches (Borges et al. 2015). Most participants agreed that cultural training would have been helpful in facilitating their adaptation to the UK if it was delivered online before migration, similar to what has been found outside the sports contexts (Reiche, Lee and Quintanilla 2014).

Personal and professional development

Most participants reported their migration experience to the UK as very positive as it allowed them to develop professionally and personally. Participants mentioned that the migration allowed them to take full-time jobs, make a living from their jobs, or allowed them to dream of becoming professional coaches.

It changed me for the better. It helped me discover my real passion, and to become more ambitious. Thanks to this experience, I know that everything is possible; I can do anything I want. If I could go back, I would do it again. (P10)

Coaches in previous studies also reported overall positive migration experiences and recommended migration to fellow coaches as an opportunity for professional development (Borges et al. 2015). The migrant coaches in a recent study (Samuel et al. 2021) provided some insights concerning their experience in terms of gaining prior knowledge of the host country and adjusting to the new professional context and their players.

Coaching full-time

Participants' main motivation to migrate was the job market in the UK and ambitions to develop as full-time coaches. In their native country, some worked part-time so moving to the UK enabled them to focus on their professional career. For example:

In Italy, I was working occasionally as an acqagym instructor. I did not have any contract; I was paid per hours (...) now I am paid well. In Italy, I was doing this for fun, as a hobby. But here I can pay my bills thanks to this job (...) I would have never thought to live through this sport. (P5)

(...) I am an ambitious person, I also work hard for my goals, and I don't like when, whether or

not I deserve something, I know that I won't get it. The British skating federation gave me the opportunity to be the coach that I have always wanted to be. (P4).

Other participants moved to the UK looking for better job opportunities and started working outside the sports context but eventually built their opportunities within their sport.

I moved to the UK 4 years ago looking for work [...] some friends of mine moved to London as everyone was saying there are more job opportunities there so I moved with them. I have worked as a waiter, nanny, and then occasionally as choreographer in a studio of a friend of mine. Then I started working more hours, I quitted the other jobs and I became a full-time choreographer. (P13)

Participants' motivation for transnational mobility was to work full-time as coaches and develop a professional career. These motivations are similar to those reported by Portuguese football coaches who migrated to Angola where they could develop full-time coaching careers (Borges et al. 2015), and to those of handball coaches who migrated to Israel where they could progress in their careers (Samuel et al. 2021).

Maintaining social relations in the native country

Maintaining social relationships with family and friends in the native country was mentioned by the coaches to be important. The geographic proximity between the UK and their native countries was seen as an advantage as this allowed the participants to visit their families and maintain their contacts with their native country.

They [family] were happy about that [move abroad], even because the UK is not that far from Italy. The flights are cheap, and I can visit them often. (P1)

An aspect mentioned by one participant who moved to the UK without her family was that being away from her family made her realize their importance in her life.

(...) now when I go back home, I love the smell of the field, I love seeing my parents cuddling on the sofa, I enjoy spending time with my grandparents...all things that before I was not able to appreciate. I am much closer to my parents. (P7)

These findings add the notion that migrant coaches have the opportunity to reflect on the importance of their families because they are away from them. Previous studies identified the challenges faced by migrant coaches when away from their families (Samuel et al. 2020) with migrant coaches identifying these moments as "emotional barriers" for them.

The views of UK-native coaches about immigrant coaches

Three main topics emerged from the thematic analysis of the native coaches' interviews: "Exchange of training methods and sport development"; "Exchange of training cultures"; "British sport tradition"; and "Training and support for foreign coaches".

Exchange of training methods and sport development

All British coaches thought coaches' immigration was positive for their own practice and for UK sports development. Their view was that by interacting with foreign coaches they could discuss new coaching approaches and improve their own coaching.

I think it [coaches' migration] is the best way to learn, as you get in touch with new techniques, methodologies, perspectives, and this might help to develop your own style. (P17)

Some coaches recognized that their sport is underdeveloped in the UK and saw coaches' immigration as a good approach for the development of the sport: "I know so many coaches from Poland, Russia, USA, China and I believe they would be so helpful here. They have a totally different approach to the sport which is what makes them better than us. I am pretty sure their help would for sure benefit the British rhythmic gymnastics" (P20). Coaches would be willing to: "hire foreign coaches [...as it] allows to mix different perspectives, methodologies, traditions, which can only lead to sport development." (P18). The findings are interesting because they align with the views of the "pioneer" migrant coaches, from previous studies, who view sports migration as an opportunity to develop the sport of the host country (Borges et al. 2015). Besides sport development, native coaches saw specific benefits of immigration to their own skills and to their athletes' skills as a consequence: "if someone like a foreign coach with new approaches can help native coaches grow professionally, athletes will, in turn, improve" (P19). These results provide some evidence that the coaches' migration could be more associated with "brain exchange" (Elliott and

Weedon 2010) rather than “brain drain”, as previous studies suggested (Orlowski, Wicker and Breuer 2016). The native coaches’ views of coaches’ migration differ from reports in the sports media which refers to foreign coaches by their foreign identity rather than their sports achievements and spreads the concerns that sport migration may affect the performance and development of national players and coaches (Vincent et al., 2010; Griggs and Gibbons 2014). Although the native coaches in the present study had no experience working abroad, some took the opportunity of international competition to seek out interactions with foreign coaches: “(...) every time I am at international tournaments with my team (...) I usually ask them so many questions, about training methodology, how many times per week they train, we share technical points of views” (P20).

Exchange of training cultures

Native coaches mentioned differences in sports culture between the UK and immigrant coaches. These differences were related to technical aspects and coaching styles. The native coaches identified positive and negative differences which also gave them an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of their own practice.

(...) she [foreign coach] likes to demonstrate rather than just explain the technique. In the UK, I have always been taught to not have much physical contact with the athlete, as this would bother the skater. However, I have noticed that skaters enjoy more training when coaches get physically involved, as showing them the right technique, recording them performing the wrong step, implementing competition simulation games (...) I have seen my skaters enjoying more the Italian coach’s session rather than mine [native coach]. They learn while they have fun. (P17)

The migrant coaches are perceived to apply the methodology from their native country in the host country. While (some) native coaches see the benefits of different methodologies, they also recognize how some coaching styles may not be culturally appropriate.

(...) her [foreign coach] coaching style used to intimidate the athletes; they were uncomfortable, as they have never been used to train in this environment (...) (P15)

A previous study also found that coaches from the former Soviet Union were required to change their

coaching behaviours when interacting with New Zealand athletes (Kerr and Moore 2015). The integration of immigrant coaches into the British sport and exercise context results in methodological and sport cultural differences being identified by native coaches. While these differences are often seen as positive opportunities for native development there also exist clashes of sports culture. These methodological and cultural exchanges have been found in previous studies with migrant athletes (Agergaard and Ryba 2014; Elliott and Weedon 2010). Also, previous studies with immigrant coaches found that they often adapt their coaching style to fit the new cultural context (Kerr and Moore 2015; Schinke et al. 2015). In contrast, the results of the present study showed that migrant coaches maintain their methodologies, and this is well accepted by the UK coaches.

British sports tradition

British coaches offered that some native coaches are not in favour of coaches’ immigration because they want to preserve British sports traditions. P19 referred that: “when they [foreign coaches] are entering a world founded on traditions for generations (...) I am pretty sure that some of my elder English colleagues would not appreciate collaborating with foreigners, as they are deeply rooted in the traditions of the sport”. P20 also reiterates this idea, by mentioning that: “they [foreign coaches] would not easily fit into the British tradition. They have a totally different approach than us, which departs from traditional British sports culture. It would be a shock for some British coaches, for example, to see athletes slapped or yelled at”. The results are in accordance with previous studies (Schinke, McGannon, Yukelson, Cummings and Parro 2015). The authors found that the coaches’ status in the host countries when compared to their native country, was not recognised in the host country sports system. For that reason, immigrant coaches struggled with cultural differences concerning athletes’ commitment and their respect to the coaches. Two coaches thought that other British coaches fail to recognize that the sport is more developed in other countries.

Nowadays British skating level is low, compared to 15 years ago when the team used to be one of the best in the World. Now UK coaches do not want to admit that the other countries are improving. They might have other techniques, styles (...) foreign coaches might help improve the UK level by bringing the new techniques and styles. (P15)

British coaches identified that cultural differences have an impact on the methodologies used by the

British coaches and the foreign coaches. The identification of these differences was considered to be important to achieve better results. This could be done by using an exchange of training cultures, as found in previous studies with athletes (Elliott and Weedon 2010). However, it seems that the British tradition of sports, adopted by some British coaches, is limiting the exchange of training methodologies. As one coach mentioned:

It is known that what you learn at school or while doing sport is somehow influenced by the culture, traditions, rules of the territory. For example, in my sport (roller speed skating) some methodological aspects are purely linked to the British tradition of the sport. I say this because I noticed from my overseas colleagues that we (British coaches) have a totally different coaching methodology specifically regarding the pro athletes. I am not sure which approach is the best but I think that if we would start implementing some of my foreign colleagues' coaching methodologies we (British team) would achieve better results. (P19)

Similarly, P17 pointed out some protectionist measures from the British sports federations and think that some sports federations in the UK are opposed to the recruitment of foreign coaches.

The British team used to be one of the strongest worldwide, whereas now there are other countries, such as Italy, Portugal, Argentina, which are much stronger because they invested money in sending skaters abroad to learn from other top teams. The British federation had never the interest to either share the knowledge with other countries or learn from another top team. (P17)

The transnational exchange of knowledge and skills seems unwelcome by some sports stakeholders in the UK. While the coaches interviewed in this study saw the benefits of immigration, they recognized cultural and traditional barriers imposed by other native coaches and federations. The findings seem to corroborate the unfavourable views found of the UK sports media about foreign coaches (Vincent et al., 2010; Griggs and Gibbons 2014).

Training and support for foreign coaches

When asked about cultural training for foreign coaches, native coaches did not agree on its usefulness for their adaptation to their new cultural con-

text. While P18 thought: "it would help coaches to feel more comfortable and confident in starting to work in another country", P15 disagreed and thought: "the important thing is to do coaching qualifications in the host country because every country has a different sports system". P20 also referred that: "the best way to adapt to the host culture and traditions is by experiencing it. I think cultural training would help them of course, but only partially". Native coaches thought that the immigrant coaches they work with had no difficulties because they received support from the clubs in relation to their bureaucratic procedures: "I know my Italian coach did not attend any training program about sport migration, and she did not find any difficulties in integrating in the UK sports system, also because the skating club helped her in sorting out all the initial documents" (P17). However, the same coach would welcome training if he was to emigrate:

(...) if I would move abroad I think I would like to attend a training or education program, as it might help me settle down. For instance, I would need to know all the bureaucratic, financial aspects of the host sport system, or how the host federation works in order to not waste extra time in getting to know all these things on my own. (P17)

The results show that cultural training could be considered relevant for foreign coaches. Previous studies found that cultural training could help coaches to acquire important knowledge about the host country (Samuel et al. 2021). However, the findings also show that some British coaches view cultural training as not essential for foreign coaches as they perceive the migration process as an experience that is not trainable. We might speculate that the lack of cultural knowledge of the coaches, might have an impact on their opinion about this type of training (Fischer 2011).

General discussion

This study aimed to explore the views of immigrant coaches about their migration process. We found that coaches' transnational recruitment was mainly influenced by social networks and their main motivation was to work full-time and develop professionally in their sport. Also, this study aimed to explore the views of native coaches about coaches' immigration. British coaches found coaches' immigration positive for sports development in terms of methodologies and styles, but they also pointed out some protectionist

measures from British sports federations opposing the recruitment of foreign coaches. The present study dispels the popular (media) discourse of immigrant coaches 'stealing' job opportunities from native coaches. On the contrary, it suggests that there is an exchange of knowledge and competences that can improve the personal and professional development of both native and immigrant coaches. Immigrant coaches identified several challenges in their adaptation to the UK but these were not readily perceived by the native coaches. Challenges were in terms of (professional) language, bureaucracy, accommodation and living cost. Some of these challenges were at first helped by the clubs, some immigrant coaches said their native colleagues helped with the sports terminology, but overall immigrant coaches were expected to overcome migration-related challenges by themselves. The fact that the native coaches in the present study had no experience of living or working abroad may have contributed to their apparent lack of empathy towards the challenges of immigrant coaches. The cultural adaptation of immigrant coaches has been proposed by Schinke and colleagues (2015) as a process that should be shared with native athletes and coaches. In this sense, all members of the sports context should engage in the process and learn cultural and sports specific aspects from each other.

Both immigrant and native coaches thought that migration was conducive to their professional development and the development of their sport. This is in line with the concept of "brain-exchange" created by Beaverstock (2005) and used in the sports context by Elliott and Weedon (2010). Coaches' migration seems to contribute to the exchange of training methods and training cultures, which results in sports development as agreed by both migrant and native coaches. This may be particularly the case because the sport and exercise settings in the present study were underdeveloped in the UK. On the other hand, British sport tradition and some protectionist measures may be barriers to brain-exchange. These particular barriers are not readily perceived by immigrant coaches who, in general, feel supported in their roles. However, it is worth pointing out that the context of the immigrant participants in our study may have positively affected their answers; they were first-time immigrants who were grateful for the opportunity to work full-time in their sport and had done so for a short period of time and without a family in low-key sport or exercise settings. Settled immigrant coaches with family responsibilities may well perceive the sport culture less positively. For instance, in higher-visibility sports, immigrant sportspeople have been seen as a threat to the British sport's traditions as reported seen in

previous studies (Falcous and Maguire 2005; Griggs and Gibbons 2014; Vincent et al. 2010). While cultural training might ameliorate some of the cultural differences, by providing information about the British sports culture and traditions, it is not currently offered or perceived as necessary.

We used the Socio-Psychological Model of Transitions in Transnational Athletic Career developed by Agergaard and Ryba (2014) and we propose to extend that model to include sport and exercise coaches' migration and to also position native coaches within that model as important stakeholders in these transnational transitions (see Figure 1). The transnational recruitment stage seems to be similar between the immigrant coaches in this study and athletes (Agergaard and Ryba 2014; see also Borges et al. 2015), as both use social networks and rely on their own individual capabilities to produce transnational mobility. There is a strong motivation for migration in order to work full-time in the sport of their choice. The establishment as a transnational coach also has parallels with athletes, as both maintain their social relations in the native country while adapting to the cultural context of the new country

The present study has some limitations that should be identified to explore avenues for future research. One limitation of this study is the use of open-ended questionnaire. While this was motivated by an understanding of immigrant sample, other strategies might have produced more in-depth results. For example, interviews conducted with a bilingual researcher, or interviews where the immigrant coach has access to an electronic translation service might both be strategies that empower the coaches to express themselves in greater depth.

Future research should look to native coaches with foreign experience and foreign coaches working in other countries. In particular, immigration to countries where the language poses a more substantial barrier or where the cultural and historical context may also constitute a barrier. In this connection, gender and ethnicity are characteristics to explore in future studies. The present study only looked at the views of the coaches, but it would be interesting to see the views of other sports stakeholders about sport and exercise coaches' migration. Future research should also investigate the perceptions of foreign coaches regarding sports media, whether the media interfere with their work, and identify best practices in the coach-media relationship.

These results should be considered with caution, because of the small sample size and the variety of sports and migratory countries. This variety can contain different constraints, particularly regarding the

type of sport, which should guide future studies to be more specific when choosing the sport and migratory country for their sample. Also, the concept of "brain exchange" should be seen according to the present study, considering that other foreign and native coaches can identify some issues with this exchange. These could be problems with social integration, inequalities in relation to peer colleagues from the native country, or even the financial advantages that some countries have in relation to particular sports (Orlowski, Wicker and Breuer, 2016).

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

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