

## How did we get here; a historical and social exploration of the construction of English FA coach education

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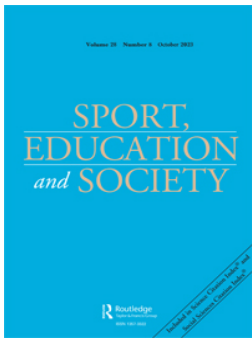
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# How did we get here; a historical and social exploration of the construction of English FA coach education

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## ABSTRACT

Formal coach education, such as courses experienced by coaches, is part of a wider education system, constructed by policy developers, course designers and coach educators. To date, research has explored the complex micro-pedagogical interactions between coach educators and coaches on courses, yet there is little understanding of the historical and social influences on the development of these systems. In response, this study analyses the social construction of The English FA's coach education system over 50 years (1967–2019). Specifically, this study aimed to (1) identify 'social architects' who influenced the development of FA coach education and (2) analyse the wider social, economic, and political influences on these architects and their development of FA coach education over time. To do so, this work re-examines data from 16 semi-structured interviews (with participants who have held significant roles within The FA e.g. Head of Coaching) and 47 policy documents (e.g. course materials). Through a deductive crystallisation process the findings recognise (1) the military's influence in positioning the coach educator as powerful, (2) how insights from PE and education have informed FA coach education development and (3) how economic opportunities from the 1990s and onward prompted an expansion of FA coach education provision. This important contribution provides a platform for further research to explore the historical social construction of coach education systems.

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Coach education; Football; Paulo Freire; Social construction; Social architect; Crystallisation

## Introduction

Formal coach education is a temporally bound endeavour that aspires to support coaches by offering *new* knowledge to support them in their coaching world (i.e. working with players, and coaching in their environment). Research on formal coach education has considered the social interaction between coaches and coach educators on courses (e.g. Dempsey et al., 2021; Stoszowski & Collins, 2016; Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2020). This work shows genuine attempts, albeit with mixed success, by coach educators to connect with learners across a range of different curricula content. However, while this body of work is necessary to understand how coach educators can enhance

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their pedagogical effectiveness, it is important to move beyond analysing the pedagogical-interactions on courses (Culver et al., 2019; Dempsey et al., 2020). For instance, Dempsey et al. (2020) demonstrated how key stakeholders within the coach education system (e.g. policy developers) influenced the development, dissemination, and implementation of The English Football Association's (FA) coach education curriculum. Formal coach education therefore not only concerns on-course interactions but also socially constructed systems, courses, and curricula, which are worthy of study. By this we refer to systems that are not sterile, and immune from influence but instead impacted by people and socio-cultural agendas (e.g. changing government policy, generational trends, etc.). Key to this is a recognition that systems are not static, but continuously evolving overtime.

In a rare analysis of coach education system overtime, Chapman et al. (2020) explored the development of FA coach education over 50 years. This work documented how pedagogy and conceptions of learning in FA coach education developed towards a socially constructed<sup>1</sup> view of coach education (i.e. where knowledge is built upon by developing meaning, continued enquiry, and collaborative dialogue between learners and educators). That study demonstrated how The FA moved somewhat towards a more 'emancipatory' pedagogy, which attempted to prioritise coach learning, rather than impose a particular way of being a coach which characterised early iterations of coach education. That analysis used Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (1973), which considers the role and presence of power in education. Freire (1973) argued that empowered learners can develop a shared critical consciousness with humble teachers such that education 'liberates' learners (i.e. abolishes an unjust society and makes one freer and more human). Conversely, Freire illustrated how power may rest with those individuals, institutions, or systems that 'oppress' learners by unjustly using force, or authority, to suppress and remove the voice of others. Using Freirean theory, Chapman et al. (2020) recognised an increase in dialogue and sharing of power in FA coach education from 1967 to 2019, albeit courses are still largely led by coach educators (Dempsey et al., 2021). The study also acknowledged, yet stopped short of exploring in detail, how individuals situated in, and influenced by wider social contexts, constructed the varied pedagogical approaches over the 50-year period. Specifically, the study briefly (i.e. through a single sentence) identified military, education and economic systems as influences that pervaded FA coach education and its development. That said, Chapman et al. (2020) study did not explore these influences on The FA's coach education system. Rather it primarily examined experiences of on-course pedagogical interactions. This is similar to much existing coach education literature which focuses on micro-pedagogic activities such as experiential learning, reflective practice and mentoring, but have left the broad social influences upon coach education underexplored.

In response to the above, this article picks up from Chapman et al. (2020), and other studies, to offer insight into an underexplored area by moving beyond the existing pedagogically focused accounts of coach education. It does so by considering the historical and social construction of FA coach education. As a precursor, there is a need to acknowledge that social interactions, such as those on coach education courses happen within social institutions (e.g. universities, community settings, football clubs). In turn, social institutions are influenced by constructed systems and policies, and are pervaded by broader social structures (e.g. education systems, economic systems, class systems) and cultural norms. To be clear, we do not see the influence of social structures upon individuals as uni-directional, nor do we consider individuals as passively devoid of agency (Freire, 1973; Jones & Thomas, 2015). Rather, individuals continuously and dynamically constitute their social context in relation to wider structures. For example, individuals with power may have the opportunity to develop, transmit, and enforce coach education systems, policies, and even curricula. Here, we refer to key individuals who exercise power to influence as 'social architects'. Indeed, it is through the lens of social architects that we explore the historic and social development of FA coach education.

Recognising the influence of key stakeholders, Bau (2016) used the term 'social architects' to describe those with a mastery of craft combined with social intelligence that can influence others within an organisation. A social architect is a person who through power, craft and social

influence, acquired via prior experiences, may influence others (e.g. Director of Coaching). Rudel et al. (2021) and Gardenswartz et al. (2010) extend this burgeoning description and identified that social architects can create vision and strategic directions, establish systems, orchestrate processes, encourage group problem solving, shape culture and oversee decision making within business organisations. In terms of coach education, social architects may produce policies and orchestrate practice that oppress (e.g. suppress their voice), or liberate coaches (e.g. empower them to be freer) (Cope et al., 2021; Freire, 1973). However, social architects are neither all powerful nor immune from wider societal and cultural norms. Instead, they reciprocally influence and constitute the micro-pedagogical and social contexts. Here binary conceptions of agency and structure are rejected, as are simplified judgements on oppressors and oppressed (see Giroux, 1992). Rather, social architects like other actors (i.e. coach developers) (see Watts et al., 2022 for an example), have been influenced by their own biographical experiences and continue to be influenced by prevailing discourses, norms and expectations. Indeed, it is because of the dynamic reciprocal influence, both upon themselves and them upon others, that social architects in coach education are worthy of study.

Building upon the view of coach education as a social construct, this study explores the key architects who developed FA coach education, the wider social influences upon them (i.e. the military, education and economic) and the subsequent influence on the development of coach education. The significance of this is in supplementing our understanding of coach education, which to date is largely pedagogical. In response, we offer a more historical and social analysis. Doing so can provide a thorough understanding of how coach education has developed and how current coach education practices in football have emerged. Without this understanding, an appreciation of coach education remains somewhat partial and (coaching) course designers will have limited understanding of what has gone before, and what continues to influence present-day coach education policy. Accordingly, this study aims to (1) identify the social architects that have influenced the development of FA coach education policy and (2) analyse the wider social, economic and political factors that have influenced these social architects in the development of FA coach education policy. Fifty years of coach development, insight, and evolution, however, involves numerous contributions, influences, and influencers, which makes for a complex mosaic of opinion concerning coach education and practice. This study does not seek to eradicate the complexity; rather it begins to illuminate an underexplored, and unexplained socially constructed phenomenon.

### ***Methodology: crystallising coach education through reanalysis***

Crystallisation is a process where the author(s) offer something different from a previously examined data set (Ellingson, 2009). For example, to deepen understanding, authors can crystallise previous work by; (1) offering different interpretations of a phenomena, (2) presenting knowledge from two differing methodologies, (3) using different presentation methods to report findings (i.e. report writing, narrative studies), or (4) providing alternative reflexive accounts of the research process. These methods may help researchers revisit previous work and offer alternative perspectives that 'crystallise' a more comprehensive view of a phenomenon (Gearity et al., 2021). Reanalysis is not common in sport coaching literature, although Gearity et al. (2021) crystallisation of care within the coach-athlete relationship is a contemporary example of how crystallisation can add new understanding to previously reported data. Crystallisation is appropriate in this study because the original data set (16 interviews and 47 documents) holds a richness and exclusivity with in-depth perspectives from an elite group of actors within the history of FA coach education. These interviews and documents have a wealth of insight and as per Martinelli et al. (2023) are worthy of reanalysis to explore new considerations.

### ***How does this study crystallise?***

From Ellingson's (2009) four suggestions for crystallisation, this piece aligns closest to the second suggestion: presenting knowledge from a differing perspective. Chapman et al. (2020) original

work focused on FA coach educators' pedagogical interactions and whether these were liberating for coaches. That data was collected with an interpretivist philosophical position, where we sought to listen to coaches as a means of recognising their experiences of the development of FA coach education policy from 1967 to 2019. This study extends that work through an alternative view that recognises how social and political factors, and powerful individuals, can influence education systems (Freire, 1973). This shift in perspective was prompted by the initial study that identified social aspects as important but did not critically elaborate on them. It also reflects our growth as researchers as during the intervening period, we have become more aware of powerful social influences upon learning. Specifically, this crystallisation provides a broader societal perspective that considers how powerful social architects have influenced the development of FA coach education. In doing so we build on the initial interpretivist pedagogical analysis and provide a somewhat more critical insight into the social development of FA coach education systems, albeit one which is still based upon and values the interpretations of those who designed and experienced these systems.

## Methods

### *Data collection – interviews and document analysis*

This study received institutional ethical approval (a period lasting five years) and was approved by The FA coach education department. Data collection included 16 semi-structured interviews with past and present coach educators, policy developers, and FA decision makers who had wide ranging contributions in the development of FA coach education (see Chapman et al., 2020 and Appendix 1 for more details). The interviews were undertaken by the first author and concluded in 2019, providing nuanced accounts from those with substantial experience of FA coach education, whose voices have been somewhat unheard. The participants had a mean 30.3 years of coaching/coach education experience and held roles such as international coaches, senior FA course designers, and FA tutors. The sample included male and female participants, participants with perspectives from the grassroots and professional game, participants who were from varied ethnic backgrounds and those who had perspectives from both the male and female game. Simultaneously, data were collected from 47 documents (e.g. FA policy documents and coach education materials, see Appendix 2). Procedurally, some of these documents were collected prior to the interviews and shared with the participants to encourage them to recall memories from this time (i.e. The Chairman's Commission). Yet, other documents were included in the analysis (if they fit the inclusion criteria) after recommendation from participants during interviews (i.e. The FA Curriculum Guide (1995)). The first author also visited the National Football Museum halfway through the participant interviews where further documents were sourced. Together, a significant corpus of data were collected from an exclusive and unique group of participants and documents. This provided opportunity to examine the historical social influences upon FA coach education and on those social architects that shaped FA coach education, as a means of crystallising our understanding of coach education. This is appropriate as Chapman et al. (2020) identified broader sociological influences on FA coach education (first coded as 'sociological influences'), yet these were not explained in depth. In contrast, the present study offers a more general contribution to knowledge, by exploring some of the wider historical and social influences on the construction and development of FA coach education policy. This paper, partnered with Chapman et al. (2020) offers a more complete view. To do this, the first author returned to the data.

### *Data analysis*

To begin data reanalysis, initial codes from the first analysis were revisited. After that we returned to the raw data, beginning with the interview transcripts because it was those that had explicitly

highlighted the three structures to explore, and we valued the interpretations of the participants. This occurred some two years after data collection though still within the ethical timeframe awarded. Clean interview transcripts (not annotated) were re-read and re-considered, whilst notes previously made from document analysis were revisited. The data were deductively coded using the prominent categories first recognised in Chapman et al. (2020); (1) military influences, (2) insights from PE and education, and (3) economic influences. These three categories provided a new means of identifying meaningful data from the interview transcripts and subsequently the documents. New codes (i.e. not previously coded) were developed as part of a revised thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2018). Once complete, the first author explored the meaning of the coded data. To develop meaning, consideration was given to how FA coach education has been reconstructed and by whom i.e. social architects. To be clear this was a back-and-forth, continuous, and simultaneous process that involved revisiting data, constructing the themes, and subjecting the themes to scrutiny from other members of the research team. These co-authors questioned the alignment of the data, the claims made and comparison between evidence from the document analysis and the participants' perspectives. The purpose of this was to ensure a sense of verisimilitude that is grounded in data and provides an insightful crystallising analysis that identifies the social architects and the social influences upon FA coach education.

### **Reflexivity**

In keeping with the interpretivist nature of this study, analysis was not void of author influence, biography, and subjectivity. To manage subjectivity, throughout the initial interview process, open-ended questions were used, and reminiscent techniques adopted (Kovach, 1990) to encourage participants to explore their own historical biographies/experiences and were not *led* towards certain answers. Secondly, a positioning statement was developed that identified the first author's biography and the connection between this study and Chapman et al. (2020). This was used as a process to manage subjectivity during the crystallisation process. Finally, multiple critical friends were sought and ensured findings appropriately reported the data (Smith & McGannon, 2016). For example, one critical friend highlighted how the categories (military, education and economy) also interact with each other, a consideration made at the end of theme 1.

### **Findings and discussion**

This section reports the historical and social development of English FA coach education based on rigorous re-analysis of 16 interviews and 47 key documents. Specifically, three influences (military, education and economic) will be described through the work of social architects. Accordingly, this section begins by introducing the key social architects within The FA, as identified by the participants. Following this, three themes illustrate how these social architects were influenced by their biographical histories and how this manifested in the development of FA coach education.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the findings we present the coaches' words as much as possible. This will include some longer and shorter quotes and is consistent with a Freirean attempt to support others' voices. Supplementing this data, each theme is concluded by a brief discussion.

#### ***FA coach education's social architects***

As described already, social architects are considered stakeholders who have the social and political capital to influence the direction of an organisation (Rudel et al., 2021). In the case of FA coach education, participants, via interview (re)analysis, identified Walter Winterbottom, Allen Wade, Charles Hughes, Robin Russell, Howard Wilkinson and Dan Ashworth as key social architects. Participants reported that these individuals held powerful roles (e.g. Director of Coaching) whilst at The FA,

and made significant changes to FA coach education. P2 alludes to when a new senior figure comes into post, FA coach education policy is typically rethought and redesigned.

The sea of changes were clear and directed by the Director of Coaching at the time ... it's like they needed to leave their mark.

Crucially, it is important to understand the biographies of the 'new' social architect(s), and the landscape in which they worked prior to appointment, because it is through these experiences that wider social structures (e.g. the military), have influenced coach education policy. For example, interviewees described some senior figures;

Wing Commander Winterbottom joined The FA in 1946 and was the first England Manager and Director of Coaching ... he trained as a PE teacher, served in the royal air force, and worked a continued career in the Central Council of Physical Recreation (involved in the distribution of government funding) (P14).

Both Wade and Hughes completed national service (P14). Both individuals were later responsible for the production of key coaching resources in the 1960s–1980s.

Allen Wade was an educated man, a lecturer at Carnegie ... Allen and Charles were solid educationalists (P4).

Howard Wilkinson held a degree in Education awarded by Sheffield Hallam University. Employed at The FA as Technical Director in 1997 and was the first generation to be in those positions that had not gone through some form of military training (P14).

Robin Russell was Wilkinson's right-hand man and was a really shrewd operator, top-class administrator, good football brain ... He was very influential during and after Hughes's reign. Robin held roles at The FA including; Assistant Director of Coaching and Head of FA Learning (P1).

Dan Ashworth had been critical of the previous coaching pathway. We needed something more appropriate; aligned to the DNA ... I remember conversations, 'Are we suggesting that we look to reform coach education?' and Dan would say 'yes' (P10).

These characterisations provide insight into the biography of some of the key social architects alongside an understanding of the valuable experiences they brought to the role. To a greater and lesser extent, these formative experiences have manifested in the work of the social architects, as did wider social influences (military, education and economic) of their time. Accordingly, the remainder of the findings explore how these social influences impacted the construction of FA coach education.

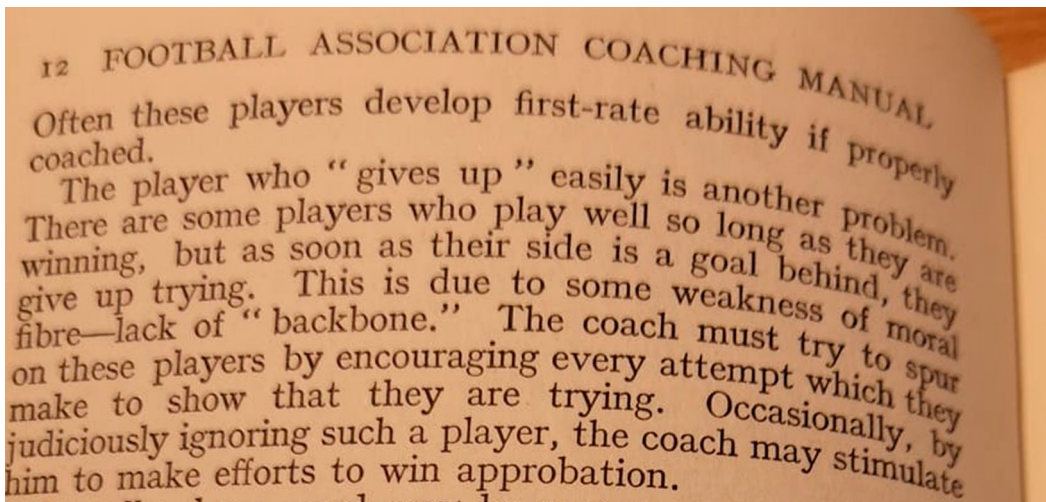
### ***Theme 1: military influence positioned the coach educator as powerful***

Football and coaching have a long history with military institutions (see Penn & Berridge, 2018; White & Hobson, 2017). This study demonstrates that 1960s and 1970s FA coach education were also linked to the military. For example, participants who had experiences of coach education from this time, characterised courses through straight-lined drills, socks that needed to be 'pulled up', and copying the tutors' practices (P1, P2). These behaviours were described to be dogmatic and regimental with demanding expectations placed upon football coaches also recognised in 1960s FA policy (Figure 1).

This characterisation aligns to often recognised military activity (i.e. drilling and exercising) and cultures (see Wilson, 2008), where individuals were taught to conform, be obedient, and respond to direct commands (Kirk, 2013). This regimental approach to coach education can be considered strict and may reflect how military culture pervaded wider 'disciplinary society' at the time (Kirk, 2001, p. 479). Indeed, early coach education social architects served during the World Wars (P14) and were instrumental in establishing courses that were described to have extremely high standards:

If the coach didn't meet the standard and got something wrong, they got hammered publicly. It wasn't nice ... It was, 'No, that's crap. Shut up. Stand there, this is the way ... the correct way'. Basically, they were the boss ... no two ways about it. They put on sessions, you copied their way, their approach. If you didn't, you would fail (P12).





**Figure 1.** An explanation in FA policy of how to coach players who 'give-up'.

This quote demonstrates a somewhat 'no nonsense' (P12), stereotypical military style approach to coach education, similar to the 'rank-and-file arrangement' that pervaded in early teacher education, which was also influenced by the military culture of the time (Kirk, 2013, p. 29).

Critically, it is wrong to conceive of the military culture as purely authoritarian, and to not recognise how other military traits such as a strategic analytical approach to problem solving influenced coach education. For instance, Charles Reep, was identified by P14 as an individual who informed how social architects developed football and coach education. Reep had an extensive military background and participants reported that his systematic analysis of football matches influenced Charles Hughes (Director of Coaching);

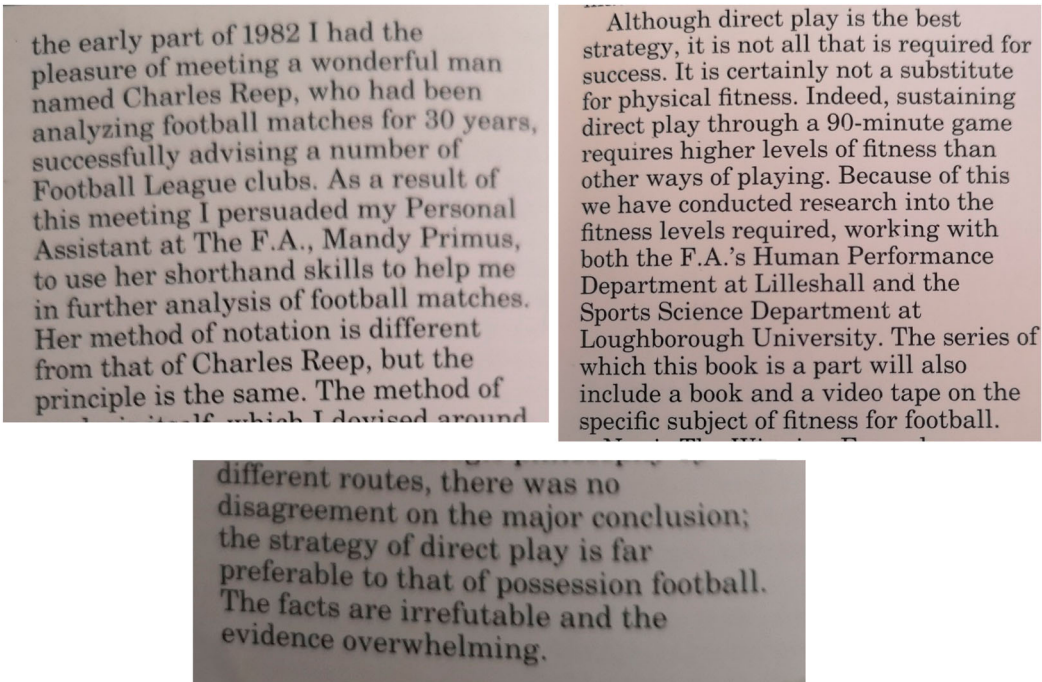
Wing Commander Reep liked the idea of match analysis ... he influenced Graham Taylor at Watford. Hughes saw that and thought, 'This makes a lot of sense. Direct football is the way forward and here's the stats to prove it' (P14).

Document analysis also illustrates that Reep's influence manifested in key coach education resources that applauded the value of a direct style of play (e.g. Figure 2). Hughes was also said to attend coach education courses to ensure that analysis from his fellow 'military man' Reep was embedded in courses (P2, P4). Furthermore, in FA documents supplied to coaches on courses, assertive language was used to prescribe the *right way* to play (Figure 3<sup>3</sup>).

P12 crystallised that coaches were directed towards a correct answer and if they deviated away from this they were 'publicly hammered' by tutors, thus demonstrating how the military culture and military connections influenced coach education. Whilst some course participants reported these experiences to be authoritarian and oppressive, others may have considered this approach as liberating. This is because coaches were developed to a required standard, deemed competent, and then rewarded with a prestigious coaching badge.

Having that badge was the important thing and there weren't many people who had it (P2).

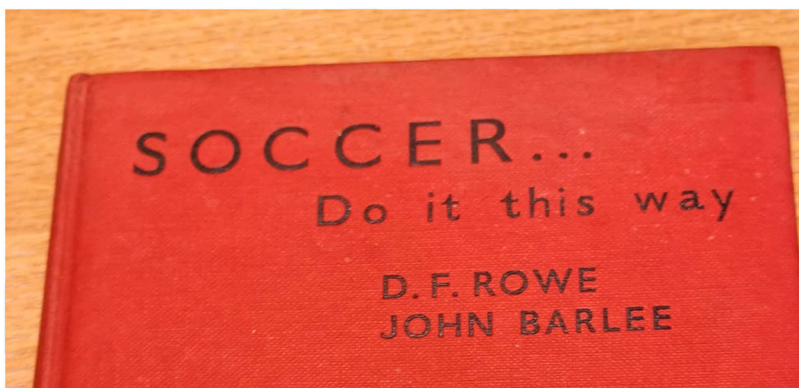
The comments by P2 and Figure 4. suggest that coaches who completed the qualification held an increased level of credibility within The FA and amongst other coaches. Subsequently, this could result in the feeling of pride and social capital amongst coaches (Cushion, Griffiths, & Armour, 2017; Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1992). Through this capital, coaches may have felt more empowered, prepared to coach, to demonstrate their knowledge and improve players. From either perspective, these examples demonstrate that wider military discourses pervaded the historical development of



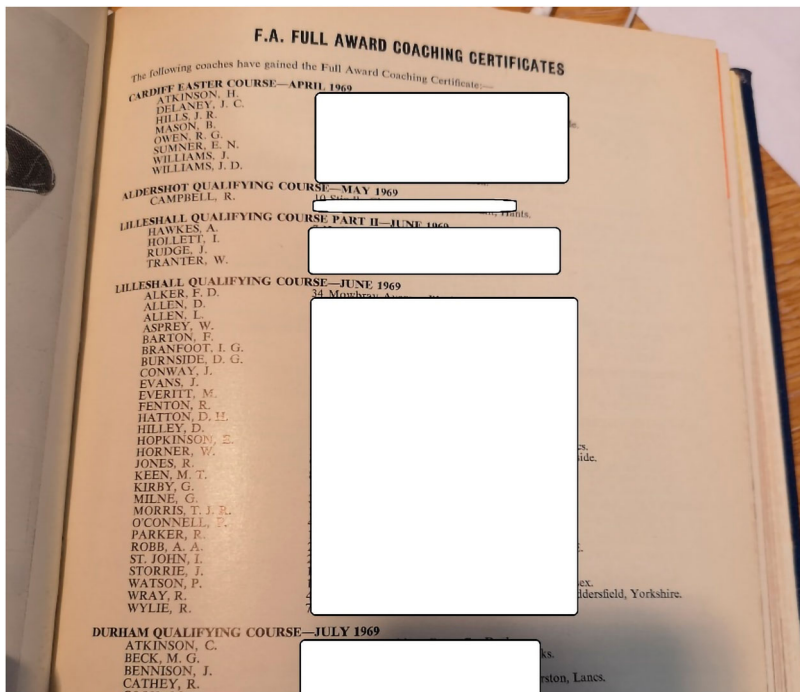
**Figure 2.** A collection of extracts from *The Winning Formula* (1990).

FA coach education policy. This influence may have waned over time, but even today, the distinctive football language such as formations, wingers and flanks are totems of the military influence upon early football coach education. Furthermore, the military still retain seats on The FA council, while the need for coaches to conform to predetermined behaviours has also been observed in studies of football coach education (e.g. Blakett, Evans & Piggott, 2021; Partington & Cushion, 2012).

The military also influenced other social structures e.g. education, discussed in the next theme. For example, the threat of war in the early 1900s called for many of the working-class boys/men (and some woman) to be fit for war, a view recognised in the 1902 model 'fitness' course taught in schools (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2019). This course was titled the 'model course' for Physical Training, an early forerunner of Physical Education. The model course was written in two sections enforcing drill (part 1) and exercise (part 2) and delivered by military personal trainers. The course encouraged



**Figure 3.** A football text that could be considered to counsel a single way.



**Figure 4.** Published list of those who completed the FA Full Award in 1969.

regimental exercise programmes that promoted discipline, conformity, and uniformity. These traits are also witnessed in FA coach education during early twentieth century. Indeed, while the military influence on PE is well established (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2019), through crystallisation this study, has for the first time, illustrated how the military influenced the regimental approach of early FA coach education.

### ***Theme 2: insights from physical education (PE) and education have informed coach education developments***

Through social architects, wider education institutions have influenced the development of FA coach education. For example, many of The FA's powerful social architects (e.g. Wade, Hughes and Wilkinson) previously studied at Higher Education institutions (HEIs). As P1 described below, historic founding colleges provided an opportunity for male students to study PE. Female students typically studied at female only institutions (inc., Irene Mabel Marsh (now a part of LJMU), Bedford College of PE and Lady Mabel College of PE). Many participants interviewed in this study recognised that social architects who studied PE at these institutions were influenced by their experiences and this impacted their work in coach education. For example, P1 explained;

Carnegie (now Leeds Beckett), Loughborough, Exeter, Madeley College (now University of Staffordshire), Jordanhill College and Borough Road College (now part of Brunel University) ... were a group of 6 PE colleges founded ... elite sports coaching and coach education emanated from these places (P1).

To greater and lesser extents, key social architects drew upon their PE experiences as they (re)developed coach education. For example, document analysis reveals Alan Wade used his PE experiences in resources such as Soccer Strategies, How to Develop Successful Team Play (Wade, 1988), which includes some of the principles from Loughborough University's Bunker and Thorpe's (1982) work on Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU). Illustrating a games-based approach, on page 21, Wade described

practicing depth in attack with a 3v2 game like situation, that progresses to 3v3 depending upon attacking team success. Reciprocally, Bunker, Thorpe and Almond also cite Wade’s text *The FA Guide to Coaching and Training* (1967) in their 1986 collection of PE papers entitled *Rethinking Games Teaching*. Thus, demonstrating close links between PE and the social architects that designed FA coach education, which resulted in policies and materials influenced by physical education.

Although, the influence of military style culture remained in 1980s ‘autocratic’ (P1) coach education practices, FA coach education in more recent times (2000s–2016) continued to be influenced by PE and wider education practices. This is evident in activities that were increasingly learner focused (see [Figure 5](#)). Participants also recognised The FA’s shift in approach on course. For example, P10 described the approach on courses since 2000;

Courses now aspire to educate coaches to encourage lifelong participation in sport and physical activity, preventing drop out ... or encourage good drop out i.e. transition to another sport.

This change in approach was reinforced by P8 and P11. Indeed, document analysis shows that in 2014, FA coach education policy encouraged the use of activities from other sports for warm-ups or coaching topics such as ‘finding space’ (i.e. *The FA Youth Award*, 2014). P4 described how on historic iterations of courses, learners would have been scrutinised and even failed for delivering this type of activity because it was ‘too far away from the real game’. This represents an appreciation of wider PE.

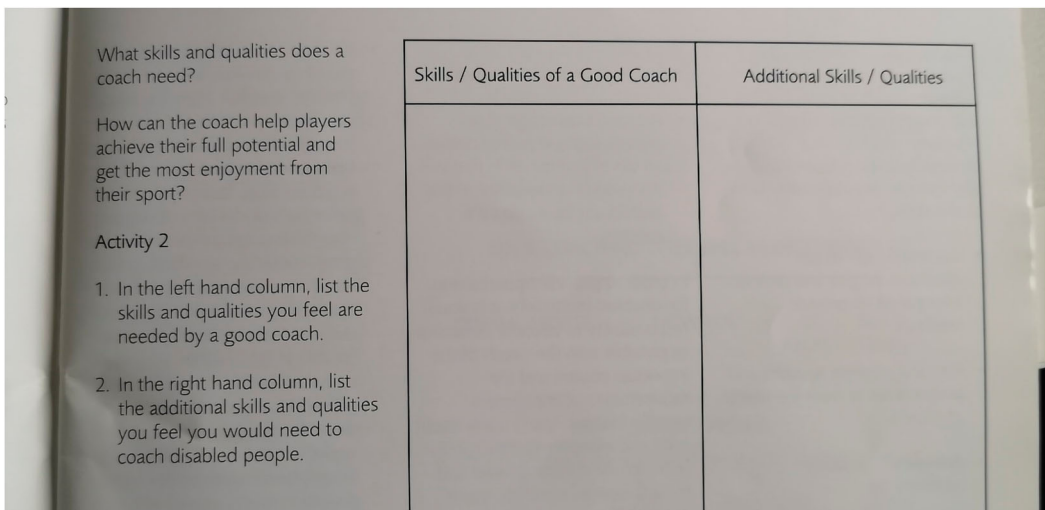
Participants attributed the continuing influence of education in coach education to the work of Dan Ashworth and colleagues who recognised a need for a different coach education workforce, informed by wider educational practice. Participants reported;

Dan pulled together an education steering group to consider changes to the coach education pathway (P10)

The FA had many different people join the organisation from different backgrounds, which brought a fresh perspective ... they had far more expertise around learning than those previously. That all gradually culminated with we’ve got an opportunity to completely change how we do coach education (P6)

We’re in a different place now. We’ve got learners that can do more self-learning, there’s access to the internet and a wide range of resources. For example, when delivering courses now, I know there will be students who use Google, and they can have better factual support than I had an hour ago. It’s totally different (P5)

The FA have aspired to develop a more positive coach education experience for learners (P9)



**Figure 5.** Learner Focused Task. The FA Football Development Programme – Disability Football (2000).

As described above, the 2016 course policy endeavoured to place people who appreciate learning in the room as educators, with learners who have access to a variety of information. As part of this, social architects of this time led on policy change that provided a clear philosophy about how to play and coach football (i.e. The England DNA see Neocleous, 2017). This philosophy was used to simplify content, align levels and restructure coach education courses which were previously described as a 'coach education tube map' (P10) because they were messy and confusing to learners and educators. Yet, it was reported that not all coach educators welcomed the repositioning of coach education as a pedagogical activity. For example, P10 explained 'There was some pretty blazing internal rows when tutor selection came' as the change of direction meant all tutors needed to reapply for coach education roles and demonstrate a background understanding of education practices. Nevertheless, a more pedagogically informed workforce were recruited and deployed. The influence of the education discourse is apparent in the language and content of recent coach education texts. For example, document analysis reveals learning expectations are clearly identified, and questions and group work are posed throughout key course texts (Figure 6a,b).

Similarly, during interviews the language used by participants to describe the person leading courses notably changed. Participants with experiences of coach education in the 1960s–2000s, (e.g. P1, P2 & P4) referred to course tutors, whereas those with experiences since 2000 (e.g. P6, P10 & P11) typically referred to coach educators, and now coach developers. The subtle changes in language represents changes in job title and could be considered an example of an epistemological shift somewhat towards more liberatory education, where the educator works *with* a learner or *develops* the learner. This contrasts with the military style command approach more reminiscent of 1970s and 1980s coach education, where a coach was someone to be trained. P2 helps to summarise these developments and concludes;

**Practical Syllabus**

This Practical Syllabus should be read in conjunction with the Unit Specifications of the Level 1 Certificate in Coaching. To achieve Units 2 and 3 of the Level 1 Certificate in Coaching via the Football pathway, you will be required to demonstrate an understanding and application of coaching the following football techniques in an appropriate environment.

Age Groups	Syllabus Components
Coaching Players Under 8 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appropriate warm-up/cool-down</li> <li>▪ Mini Soccer (5v5)</li> <li>▪ Key techniques, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– running with the ball</li> <li>– turning</li> <li>– dribbling</li> <li>– shooting</li> <li>– passing and control</li> <li>– goalkeeping</li> <li>– ball control</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Coaching Players Under 10 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appropriate warm-up/cool-down</li> <li>▪ Mini Soccer (7v7)</li> <li>▪ An Introduction to game understanding in attack and defence</li> <li>▪ Key techniques and skills including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– running with the ball</li> <li>– turning</li> <li>– dribbling</li> <li>– shooting</li> <li>– passing and control</li> <li>– goalkeeping</li> <li>– ball control</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Coaching Players Over 10 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appropriate warm-up/cool-down</li> <li>▪ Small-sided/appropriate games</li> <li>▪ Game understanding in attack</li> <li>▪ Game understanding in defence</li> <li>▪ Combination play (eg 1v1, 2v1, 2v3)</li> <li>▪ Key techniques and skills including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– running with the ball</li> <li>– turning</li> <li>– dribbling</li> <li>– shooting</li> <li>– heading</li> <li>– passing and control</li> <li>– goalkeeping</li> <li>– ball control</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

(a)

**Task 4 – Develop a Session Plan**  
Small Group Work Learning Task

This task contributes to the knowledge and understanding of specified units of the 1st4sport Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football (OCR). Information on aspects of this task can be found in Chapter 8 of *The FA Level 2 Coaching Handbook*. The task is designed to help you understand how to take the information about your players and the implications of the LTPO to develop a football coaching session plan. It will introduce you to the Coaching Session Planner template and the aims, key technical aspects and session content of a credible football coaching session.

You will have approximately one hour for this task. Your FA Tutor will ask you to work together in your small groups to create a plan, ensuring you understand the principles of planning a session. While this task is not formally assessed here, you should be confident that you have an appropriate understanding of the principles and will be expected to show that you can apply them in your future planning of assessed sessions.

**The Task**

Your FA Tutor will introduce you to the Coaching Session Planner template. In your groups, complete the activities below.

- a Read the case study below and discuss how to complete the Coaching Session Planner with this basic/background information.
 

*You have a one-hour football coaching session with a club junior squad of 16 under-13-year-old boys. One of the boys has asthma and two have mild learning difficulties. The session is due to take place on 25 October 2007 at the All Stars Playing Field, which is regularly checked by the groundsman, and there are not expected to be any particular health and safety issues.*

*The action plan point that you gave yourself from the last session was to make sure that you got the equipment for the session out before the players arrived. The last session that you did with the squad focused on individual defending. You now want to follow it up with defending collectively to improve cover and support.*
- b Use the blank Coaching Session Planner that follows but ignore the section on warm-up and cool-down (you will revisit this later in the learning programme). Outline what you think the content of the session should be, and identify the key technical aspects and session content.
- c Finally, complete the Development of the Session section, identifying how, as a group, you think the session might be developed.

(b)

**Figure 6.** (a). Key curricula content shared with learners – the FA level one (2009); (b). Appropriate tasks developed to promote group learning – The FA level one (2012).

The FA have realised coach education reflects education and what happens in education. There is an understanding that not all people will achieve at the same speed and in the same time, so give them different opportunities.

A less uniform approach to coach education now exists compared to early courses, albeit there is still evidence that it remains largely tutor centric with Dempsey et al. (2021, p221), reporting that 'coaches had little control over the selection, sequencing, pacing, and evaluation' of curricula. That said coaches also now have access to other sources of information. For instance, an increasing number of HEI undergraduate and postgraduate courses have enabled coaches to gain new knowledge (Hall et al., 2019). Coaches also have access to an increasing range of coaching information including on-course materials (i.e. handbooks, Vimeo videos), online FA resources (i.e. The Bootroom – a virtual learning platform, Coachcast podcast) and non-FA media/social media (e.g. SkySports, UK Coaching Applied Research Journal, Twitter and YouTube). These multiple sources of education help liberate coaches. For instance, the newly employed coach education workforce can draw upon these sources to meet learners' needs and thrive in their nuanced context. Conversely, access to multiple sources of information may have a negative connotation and encourage people to be colonial about their information sources and vie for capital (e.g. by providing accreditation). Indeed, while The FA hold a powerful role and influence on employability within the sector, other stakeholders also provide knowledge (e.g. universities and private organisations). So, although within The FA system, the aforementioned tube map has been simplified, coach education in England remains a complicated and somewhat fragmented landscape. In keeping with this, Hall et al. (2019) have called for a greater dialogue between NGBs and HEIs and clarity over the role that each could, or should, play in educating coaches. As Chapman et al. (2020) demonstrate, coach education can develop and thus such collaboration is a possibility; albeit it may need the support of contemporary social architects who have strategic knowledge of education policy and practice. Such collaboration could further embed the influence of PE and wider education on FA coach education.

### ***Theme 3: economic influences prompt an expansion of FA coach education***

Education is a political act (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 2002, 2013) and over time FA coach education was affected by economic influencers, including policies from various governments.

We needed more coaches; we needed better coaches and it just so happened there were some very valuable government funding streams to tap into to achieve this (P14).

As described above and acknowledged in The FA chairman's commissioned report (The FA, 2015), The FA has long recognised a requirement for more educated football coaches. The link between FA coach education and government funding has existed for some time. For example, in 1965 the UK labour government established the Advisory Sport Council (ASC). The introduction of ASC provided the government with an opportunity to take a tighter grasp over sport in the UK (Day & Carpenter, 2015). ASC's introduction coincided with an approximate 35% increase in funding available to National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in the UK by 1970. This funding represented the changing perception of sport and 'coaching' within the British public, who were previously sceptical of its value (Day & Carpenter, 2015). Through the provision of funding, the UK government had the opportunity to indirectly influence NGBs policies.

For the first time, however, data in this study explains how government funding and other economic sources have influenced the development of FA coach education. P14 explained that a commercial imperative to develop the best footballers in England demanded that coach education standards were higher;

In 1984 The FA launched The FA National School (Lilleshall), trying to select sixteen of the best 13-year-olds footballers ... That meant we needed qualified coaches, so the demand for qualified coaches, from the mid-80s increased ... Over time other clubs wanted similar, which led to academies and the closing of Lilleshall ... The

clubs were adamant on developing their own programs and couldn't see the point of releasing their players to Lilleshall, they wanted to do it themselves (P14).

As the demands of professional football clubs to develop players through their own academies increased, a greater need for high-quality coaches existed. In time, the professional game was not the only focus of The FA's attention, as an ambition to develop more players in grassroots contexts grew. This required coaches that were deemed *well-educated* and *better prepared*.

(Social Architects) later decided to have a Level 1 course (because of the increased need for coaches). It wouldn't be examined, it would be 16-hours, and we had discussions with 1st4sport to get funding. The funding quota for a Level 1, was about £200 ... McDonald's were also interested in sponsoring, so we produced a pack ... they also gave vouchers to their staff to complete the course ... so the course was extraordinarily successful in terms of attendance. When we looked at attendance, it was basically further education (FE) students. FE colleges were thinking, 'How can we get more money in? Here's a nice course, we'll put this on' (P14)

This account demonstrates the coming together of different economic stakeholders including public and private sectors (i.e. McDonalds<sup>4</sup>), combined with football clubs to educate more coaches. It also illustrates how in the mid-1980s, and onwards, that coach education became a viable income stream, prompted by the ambitions of British governments 'concerned with developing a skilled workforce' (P1). As first recognised by Chapman et al. (2020), this saw the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). An NVQ is a qualification that is aligned with the skills and knowledge specific to a particular industry job role and were introduced to make clearer the 'jungle' that was vocational qualifications (Young, 2011). The introduction of NVQs was a change in the education landscape that would direct the future trajectory of coach education in England.

It was critical that The FA embraced the NVQs ... especially with a greater demand than ever for better coaches, because these qualifications would be supported with government funding. (P14)

Social architects of the time were aware of these financial opportunities and saw the chance to expand coach education provision using new income streams. In the late 1990s onwards, document analysis demonstrates The FA's offer extended the preliminary<sup>5</sup> and full awards to a four-level model (FA level 1, level 2, UEFA B & UEFA A), which also included optional, 'bolt-on' (P8) bespoke courses (e.g. The FA Youth Award, Goalkeeping awards, Talent Identification awards, The FA Psychology awards).

This expansion of coach education, prompted by economic changes has had significant impact, as P5 reported:

In the early 2000s, Sport England statistics said less than 1% of all youth teams in the country had a qualified coach at any level ... Think about that ... Today we're talking about over 90%. (P5)

Economic opportunities influenced the restructuring of courses and led to an increase in the quantity of coach education courses available to coaches. The NVQs required education providers to introduce key learning outcomes that mapped learning towards assessment. This ensured that learners met a competency list, but proliferation of courses could also be construed as an income generating activity;

The level two coaching award was mapped against standards and importantly we could get significant funding (P1)

When the NVQs came, in the late 90s, there was a massive influx of money (P2)

FE college drew the money down, they kept 60% for admin, gave 40% to the NGB. That's 40% for every candidate, the more candidates you've got, the more money you've got (P1)

The FA qualifications were able to go on the government-funded framework (NVQs), which helped drive the popularity of coaching courses at the time. That's the recognition that was part of the turbo boost in that late 90s, early 2000s (P5)

The respective county FAs would get into bed with the local college to grab funding ... especially given the funding available per student ... £1300-£1500 (P14)

The FA and social architects have developed FA coach education through the funding that has been accessed, yet P11 queries to what extent this funding has developed *better* coaches;

Financially, there seems to be quite a lot of support now ... So, lots more people coaching but are we getting better coaches? I'm not sure.

Access to expanded coach education opportunities and more indirect funding has the potential to liberate coaches by providing choice over *their* coach development pathway and to explore *their* needs. However, a market has developed, and funding is not always available to all. This means that for today's coaches attending courses can come at a financial cost and employability in a developing coaching profession can offer little financial reward and certainty of long-term employment (Ives et al., 2021). This is a view supported by P6;

But, at the end of the day, were asking people to take time out of their lives and money out of their bank account to take part in coach education and most are just volunteers.

Thus, while researchers have argued that more development is needed to improve the quality of coach education provision (e.g. Cope et al., 2021; Dempsey et al., 2021; Lewis et al., 2018; McCarthy, Allanson & Stoszkowski, 2021), to enable this, coach education providers need to access funding. However, this is not always possible as funding opportunities can fluctuate with changing political parties and interests. Economic influences on coach education are an important area for future research to consider. This is because as described already with the introduction of HEI coaching programmes, as well as an influx of private independent coach education and coach mentoring companies, the marketplace is increasingly contested and competing economic stakeholders will likely shape how coach education is understood and (re)designed in the future.

Overall, these three themes illustrate how wider social, economic and political systems have influenced FA coach education policy and its (re)development. From a Freirean perspective, these systems have the opportunity to liberate or oppress coaches. To offer two examples, firstly, female coaches may have been oppressed by a wider system that saw an overtly masculine and military influence upon coach education policy during the 1960s and 1970s. Secondly, the wider economic influences on coach education policy over time have in some eras (e.g. 1980s) somewhat oppressed those on low incomes. Here coach education and to an extent coaching careers, may not be accessible. Yet, when coupled with educational opportunities in later times (i.e. the introduction of NVQ's in the '90s) these systems may have provided opportunities to liberate coaches. The influence of these systems is therefore complex. Nonetheless, there remains no doubt that FA coach education has been influenced by wider social systems as illustrated through the social architects identified herein.

## Conclusion

This study has built upon existing work (Chapman et al., 2020) by unveiling the historic and social development of FA coach education over time. A crystallisation approach enabled a deductive reconsideration of previously analysed data from 16 participants and 47 documents. Through the reanalysis, this study illustrates some of the complex social and historic influences upon FA coach education including; (1) the military's influence in positioning the coach educator as powerful, (2) how insights from PE and education have informed coach education development (i.e. games-based learning, appreciating individuals learning journeys), and (3) how economic opportunities have prompted an expansion of FA coach education provision. This contribution provides a more complete understanding of how FA coach education has been (re)shaped and is recognised today. This was achieved by considering how the historic and social influences intertwined with the actions of key social architects in FA coach education and how they manifest in the experiences of coaches and policy documents. Informed by the findings, this study calls for future coach education



research to acknowledge that any (coach) education policy is not merely pedagogical nor divorced from its historical and social context. In doing so, we see the need for coach education research that includes and extends analyses of pedagogies or micro considerations of interactions at a given point in time in respect of specific historical, temporal and broader contexts. To that end, this study concludes by raising some key reflective questions for coach educators, policy developers, and researchers to explore, and which might further illuminate the complexity of coach education.

Reflective questions for policy developers and coach educators;

- (1) To what extent will the military influence on courses be visible in our future policy and practice (i.e. are we still replicating a more command and control approach on coach education)?
- (2) To what extent does the existing fragmented education system, with multiple providers supplying knowledge, liberate, or oppress coaches?
- (3) How would a defragmented coach education system create synergy between HE and coach education providers?

Questions for researchers;

- (1) Who are the current social architects (including their biographies) within coach education, and to what extent are they building upon the historical, social, and economic development of FA coach education?
- (2) How are the future social architects in coach education identified, how do they come to power, and how well prepared are they to navigate dynamic social, political, and economic contexts?
- (3) How does existing coach education support different coaches (e.g. student coaches, parent coaches) to thrive in *their* own world?
- (4) Within the broader economic context, and in respect of the historic, if somewhat stalled, 'professionalisation of coaching' agenda, does current coach education represent value for money for coaches and for sporting organisations?

## Notes

1. As opposed to a more behaviourist approach where *knowledge* is seen as static, correct, and to be implanted into others, a discourse that is common in coach education (Leeder, 2022).
2. Although this study focuses on those named as social architects by the interviewed participants, these individuals worked within a multifaceted system with the presence of a variety of other stakeholders. Therefore, it is more complex than to assume all change was subject to their decision making. The social architects discussed herein embodied the change and wider social discourse.
3. Figure 3. Is of a text prior to the 1967 timeframe of this study but does illustrate a continued discourse of authoritarian way to play football.
4. For further insight the work of McDonalds see Houlihan and Bradbury (2013)
5. This was the first coaching award that coaches could achieve in The FA's coach education pathway in the 1960s–1990s.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Participant information (obscured)

Participant Number	Age	Time spent as a coach	Time at the FA including within coach education	Time period discussed and experienced	Previous experiences and roles held (not exhaustive)
1	61–70	45 years	31 years	1980–2019	Played non-league football International coach Academy Coach FA tutor.
2	71–80	50 years	45 years	1974–2019	Played semi-professionally Coached semi-professionally FA tutor FA coach mentor.
3	41–50	14 years	6 years	1993–2018	Played professionally First team coach Senior FA course designer.
4	81–90	40 years	30 years	1967–2000	Played semi-professionally Managed at semi-professional level FA tutor Lecturer.
5	51–60	35 years	25 years	1980–2019	FA tutor FA course designer Senior FA staff member.
6	31–40	20 years	12 years	1993–2019	Academy coach, Senior community football role (non-FA) FA community programme coach FA tutor.
7	51–60	29 years	27 years	1980–2019.	Played professionally National team youth coach. FA tutor Senior FA course designer.
8	31–40	20 years	11 years	1993–2019	First team coach (semi-professional senior football) Senior role in Centre of Excellence FA community programme coach, FA tutor.
9	61–70	35 years	14 years	1980–2017	Played semi-professionally Academy coach Senior academy role FA tutor FA course designer.
10	31–40	20 years	8 years	1993–2019	Centre of excellence coach FA football development roles FA tutor.
11	41–50	25 years	14 years	1993–2017	Academy coach Senior role within community football (non-FA) FA tutor.
12	61–70	41 years	1-year English FA coach educator. 17 years another countries FA.	1977–2000	Played professionally International coach, FA Tutor
13	51–60	26 years	15 years	1997–2019	Played professionally Premier League and Football League first team coach FA tutor FA course designer.
14	61–70	30 years	30 years	1974–2019	

(Continued)

Continued.

Participant Number	Age	Time spent as a coach	Time at the FA including within coach education	Time period discussed and experienced	Previous experiences and roles held (not exhaustive)
					Played semi-professionally Senior role within FA coach education department Senior FA course designer
15	31–40	15 years	10 years	2001–2019	Full time academy staff Senior staff in community football department FA tutor.
16	61–70	40 years	40 years	1973–2019	Played semi-professionally First team coach in Football League Senior academy staff Senior FA staff, FA course designer.

## Appendix 2. Documents analysed (47)

Allen Wade (1967) – The FA Guide to Training and Coaching	The FA coaching Handbook (1996)	The FA football development Programme – Disability Football (2000)	Les Reed (2004) – Basic Team Coaching	FA Level 1 certificate in coaching football course file (2009)	Youth Development Review (2012)	New FA Level 1 course file (2016)
Department of Education and Science (1968) -The report on football (Chester Report).	Soccer Star Video (1996)	Level Club Coach Handbook (2002)	FA Guide for non-league clubs – Based on Disability act – (2004)	The Future Game – (2010)	FA level 2 Certificate in coaching Football (2012)	New FA Level 2 course folder (2016)
Allen Wade (1978) – The FA Guide to Teaching Football	Howard Wilkinson (1997) – Charter for Quality	Level Club Coach Video (2002)	Craig Simmons (2005) – Long Term Player Development	FA Strategic Plan (2011)	FA Commissioners Report (May 2014)	FA Level 1 Qualification Specification (2016)
Charles Hughes (1979) – Soccer Tactics and Teamwork (printed in "73, "75,"78 also)	FA Coaching Certificate – course file (1997)	FA Annual Review 2002/03	Richard Lewis (2007) – Review of Young Player Development in Professional Football	FA National Game Strategy 2011–2015	FA Commissioners Report v2. (Oct, 2014)	FA Level 2 Qualification Specification (2016)
Charles Hughes 1980 -Soccer Tactics and Skills (reprinted nine times up until 2000).	FA Coaching Licence course file (1997)	FA Annual Review 2004/05	FA Vision 2008-2012	Introduction of the EPPP (Premier League & FA) (2012)	FA Goalkeeping Level 2 course file (2014)	FA Women's Strategy 2017–2020

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Charles Hughes (1990) – The Winning Formula.	FA Ability Counts (First FA Disability Programme) (1999)	FA Learning Budget (2004)	Football Development Department Discussion for Coaching 2008–2012	Andy Abraham (2012) – Elite Club Coach Project for the FA	FA National Game Strategy 2015–2019
The FA Curriculum Guide (1995)	The FA Football Development Programme – Out of school Football – (2000)	Les Howie (2004) – Football Parents	Developing the Player: The 4-corner approach DVD (2009)	FA Youth Award inc.. Mod1,2,3 – (2012)	UEFA B course file (2015)

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