Towards a [re]conceptualisation of power

in high-performance athletics in the UK

A CONSTERDINE

PhD 2020

Towards a [re]conceptualisation of power

in high-performance athletics in the UK

ALEXANDRA CONSTERDINE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements of

Manchester Metropolitan University

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sport and Exercise

Sciences

Manchester Metropolitan University

2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I lay the blame for this thesis at the door of my first Director of Studies, Dr Bill Taylor. As it was his foresight, patience and wisdom that has encouraged me to persevere, so he must shoulder some of the burden. Despite being constantly challenged in the last five years, I offer my unending gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to him.

I also extend sincere thanks as well as further blame to my supervisory team. To Dr Laura Gale, my second Director of Studies, Dr Ryan Groom and Dr Samantha Oldfield who have provided me with their well measured advice and questions.

Furthermore, I recognise that without the willing contribution from all who acted as research participants I would have no thesis at all. Therefore, thank you to everyone I interviewed and I hope to do justice to your involvement.

To my well-meaning friends and family who forgave me for not being fully present, I extend my warmest gratitude. I am indebted to your foolhardy belief in me throughout my research. My parents, Rose and Bill, have kept me grounded throughout.

Finally, to the two people most affected by my studies, Tom and Mikey, I thank you the most. I have found this immersive experience to be all consuming and you have been constant and unwavering in your love and support throughout. Thank you boys!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Amateur Athletics Association
AAC	Amateur Athletic Club
ASA	American Sociological Association
BAME	Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicity
BC	British Cycling
BME	Black and Minority Ethnicity
BOA	British Olympic Association
BAF	British Athletics Federation
BSA	British Sociological Association
CRiC	Cluster for Research into Sports Coaching
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (UK Government)
DoS	Director of Studies
FE	Further Education
Futures	British Athletics Futures Programme
GB(s)	Governing Body/Bodies
GBR	Great Britain
GTA	Graduate Teaching Assistant
HCAF(s)	Home Country Athletics Federations
HE	Higher Education
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations - now called World Athletics
ICF	Informed Consent Form
IRBs	Institutional Review Boards
ISP	Information Sheet for Participants
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University
NCDP	National Coach Development Programme
Oxbridge	Is a portmanteau of the UK universities: Oxford and Cambridge
PB	Personal Best
PE	Physical Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
RA	Research Aims
SPAR	A supermarket company owned by Spar Food Distributions Limited.
Team GB	Team Great Britain (The name for athletes representing GB at the Olympic games)
Team Ineos	A professional cycling team formally known as Team Sky 2010-2019
Team NB	Team New Balance
UK	United Kingdom
UKA	UK Athletics
UKAD	UK Anti-Doping Agency
UKSP	UK Sport
US	United States (of America)
WCPP	British Athletics World Class Performance Programme
WAAA	Women's Amateur Athletic Association

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to [re]conceptualise the manner in which we have considered and described the coach-athlete relationship(s) in high-performance sport. Using the sporting domain of elite track and field athletics in the United Kingdom (UK), the research focuses on the way power plays a central role, not only among and between coach and athlete, but also the impact that coaching managers, equipment sponsors, athlete agents, and selectors have on the power dynamics evident at this level.

Drawing on poststructuralist and postmodern theory and sensibilities, as well as the writings of such as Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980), Richardson (2000a; 2000b), Rose (2000), St. Pierre, (1997; 2000; 2011) and Schostak (2006), this study takes a contemporary and critical perspective to reconsider the ways in which coach-athlete relationships have, up to this point, been both described and portrayed within the literature and the sporting area.

This research comes at a time when UK sporting agencies, the press, and other interested groups are struggling to fully comprehend how the contemporary coach-athlete relationship(s) operates in the rarefied atmosphere of elite athletics. Stories of physical and emotional abuse, athlete-coach fall out, mental health concerns related to loss of sporting identity, and the pressures inherent in the commodification of the sport performance, have, I contend, at their heart, issues of power.

Over 35 interviews with coaches, athletes, Governing Body (GB) staff, and sporting agents and sponsors were engaged with. The data generated from these were examined using the poststructuralist and postmodern writings of those listed above and other critical thinkers who conceptualise power as being fluid, transient and non-possessive, e.g. Elias (1978), Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980), Hargreaves (1986) and Westwood (2002).

Findings suggest that the existing models of coach-athlete relationship(s) are both limited and limiting. In portraying the relationship as a simple duality governed mainly by behavioural humanist interactions, these conceptualisations (such as Jowett, 2007; 2009; 2017; Jowett and Cockerill, 2002; 2003; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett and Shanmugam, 2016) overlook the complex nature of the way power plays out in this rarefied domain; neither do they take account of other power dynamics evident in this sports setting.

The significance of this work is that it provides a theoretically and data led critical reconceptualisation of these relationships and, in turn, suggests that to fully understand the nature of these interactions, we must consider new ways in which power operates in these arenas. By offering novel ways of thinking about the reality of these interactions, it may be possible to suggest a more insightful and thoughtful set of ideas, one that allows us to better understand the nature of coach-athlete relationships operating at this level.

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION: WALKING THE COURSE, MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE

Prelude

The sport-power relationship under scrutiny

> As a socio-cultural and historical phenomenon, sport remains profoundly opaque: it has proved strongly resistant to critical analysis, and by far the most intractable aspect is the question of the relationship between sport and power (Hargreaves, 1986:1).

In John Hargreaves's (1986) seminal work, *Sport, Power and Culture,* he challenges the consensus that in Western societies power is located in one place or possessed by a political elite. Instead, he argues that power has the capacity to circulate through the social body where networks of power extend beyond that of government and the State through to the fissures of civil society. This capillary attribute implies that power infiltrates all aspects of everyday life and is expressed as many different forms of power relations between dominant and subordinate groups in society. Power may find embodiment within economic, cultural or political institutions as well as through *vis-à-vis* interaction and can be exercised openly or covertly, with or without resistance, or by taking or withholding action (Westwood, 2002). Consequently, I posit that power relations are complex, mobile, difficult to unpick and can have consequences beyond their intended location. Hargreaves elaborates that:

> Power relations are rarely total in their scope, or totally one way in their effects, for agents can never perfectly predict and control the whole environment of their operations, and least of all the actions of other agents and or the responses of power subjects (Hargreaves, 1986:5).

Sport is one such arena where complex power relations operate. Given the historical and social importance of sporting activities, Jarvie (2012) contends that the sport-power relationship may need to be considered within wider forms of culture, namely late capitalist, consumer, and popular culture when analysed.

Although the social value and significance of sport varies between and within cultures, it is '…because sport played different roles in relation to different cultures that it was able to reproduce existing power relations' (Jarvie, 2012:28). I offer that these power relations are not stagnant nor definitive, rather they represent a permanent '…narrative of struggle that blends individual and collective action or agency with political economic and cultural flows and forces' (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002:8). To elaborate, these power relations are fluid and need continual attention and modification to either maintain the social order, or undergo fundamental reform during periods of social flux (Hargreaves, 1986). Through contestation, compromise and negotiation, other writers such as Coakley (2015) and Groeneveld et al. (2010) have acknowledged the transformative capabilities of the sport-power relationship, where all parties regardless of dominant or subordinate grouping profit from the ensuing entanglement and subsequent conciliatory process (Hargreaves, 1986). Far from being disregarded as a harmless distraction or an insignificant pastime, sport is now presented as having significant social, cultural, and economic value (Blackshaw and Long, 2005; Nicholson and Hoye, 2008). This central feature of many Western societies intersects with the complex array of political, economic, historical, institutional, and cultural processes, where sport has become an integral part of the fabric of everyday life (Jarvie, 2012; Houlihan, 2008; Warde, 2006). Sport, in all its prismatic forms, matters. And the way that it matters varies, including aspects of international globalisation, world economics, mass-media, and consumerism. Equally, sport is used by governments in terms of national prestige, control of social problems, social cohesion, and health promotion. Furthermore, sport and physical activity is embodied in the lived experiences of individuals, whereupon it takes on levels of personal significance and meaning (Hargreaves, 2002; Laker, 2002; Maguire, 2011; Warde, 2006). To explore further, Bramhan (2008) posits that 'Sport may be valued intrinsically for its own sake because it develops personal skills, competition, self-esteem and fun for participants' (10). Furthermore, it has value beyond the personal and has political ramifications throughout society, for

Bramhan continues:

> Sport can also produce wider externalities, by making a valuable contribution to other government with respect to national prestige, to foreign policy and international diplomacy, to tourism and city regeneration, to local community development, to health, as well as helping to address social divisions around class, 'race,' gender and disability (Bramham, 2008:10).

Sport as seen in this context, pervades Western culture and it is partly for this reason, where it is tightly interwoven into the warp and waft of the social milieu, that Hargreaves (1986) identifies the challenge of studying sport and society. The significance of power relations that flow through the social complicate and magnify these challenges due to the omnipresent nature of the workings of power (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002). As the sports world is coterminous with the social world, it is ideally placed to examine the explicit workings of power (Sage, 1990). Yet more problematically, the subtle multiple manifestations of the nuances of power are harder to disentangle and the difficulties lie in the assertion that power relations are seldom subject to the public gaze (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002).

The social (in)significance of sports studies

In spite of its importance, Washington and Karen (2001), in reference to North America, have argued that the sociology of sport has not always received the acknowledgment it deserves. They suggest that sports sociology has been marginalised and overlooked by mainstream sociology, specifically the significant American Sociological Association (ASA). This oversight is juxtaposed with the economic and cultural centrality of sport resulting in a call for research into '…how leisure products and practices are produced and distributed and how they intersect with the educational, political and cultural institutions' (Washington and Karen, 2001:187). This lament echoes the earlier view of Jarvie (1990) in the United Kingdom (UK) who called for a sociological exploration of the experiences of the sports practitioner in order to better understand the social context within which to frame the agent's experiences. This position is in keeping with later work by Jarvie (2012) and by other social commentators (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002) who have

criticised many text about sport, culture and society due to their apparent lack of critical thinking and indifference to the larger social context. Furthermore, when couched in these terms, Bush et al. (2013:5) offer further criticism of the '…widespread and often superficial appropriation [of cultural studies] by sports-focused scholars' and adds to the growing concern that sports coaching research needs to widen its physical and scholarly remit (Potrac et al., 2007) and that it lacks a clear theoretical base (Lyle and Cushion, 2017).

This neglect has, to some extent, been mirrored in the privileging of a technocratic discourse of sport over socio-cultural aspects, leading to a dominant ideology of the scientific analysis of sport and physical activity and the marginalisation of other paradigms (Andrews, 2008; Bush and Silk, 2010; Cushion et al., 2003; Potrac et al., 2002). During the first two decades of the twenty-first century a number of researchers responded to the call to readdress this perceived imbalance and to challenge the positivistic, reductionist interpretation of sports performance and sports coaching in particular (e.g. Cassidy et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2011; Lyle and Cushion, 2017).

By recognising and championing the role of the coach in the development of athletes across the whole range of sports participation, coaching is increasingly seen by some as a socially embedded activity where the coach-athlete relationship(s) becomes crucial (Cushion et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2003; 2004). It is this aspect of the coaching process that has seized my attention and, although the coach-athlete relationship(s) has been central to academic study since the start of the new millennium, the specific socio-cultural focus has often been overlooked or only researched in terms of coaching effectiveness as opposed to judging coaching quality (Mallett and Tinning, 2014). Nonetheless, there has been a steady rise in theoretical and empirical research that recognises the complex, multifaceted, contested and problematic nature of coaching that arises out of the social world in which athlete, coach and contextual interactions are deemed to be crucial (Cushion, 2013; Cushion et al., 2006; Jones, 2006a; Potrac and Jones, 2009).

It is at the nexus of social interaction where the key themes of power, control, and politics exist, influencing the synthesis, development and (re)creation of the coach-athlete relationship(s) (Ronglan, 2011). Just as Jones et al. (2004) argue that the coach-athlete relationship(s) is at the heart of the coaching process, Ronglan (2011) suggests that interaction and power lie at the heart of this relationship. Exploring these multifaceted and imbricated themes is an area that could yield rich insights into the diverse, problematic and contentious nature of coaching. This position challenges the notion that coaching practice and athlete learning is a mechanical, asocial, linear, and straightforward process (Denison and Avner, 2011; Jones, 2006a; Nash and Collins, 2006; Potrac et al., 2002). The development of the coach-athlete relationship(s) is one that is considered to being born out of fluid and changing power relations between significant stakeholders, each influencing and being influenced by social dimensions of learning, power and knowledge (Ronglan, 2011). This is a compelling perspective worthy of additional study; indeed, the potency of power is echoed by authors from such diverse fields as social science, political science, and business management, further exemplified by Clegg's assertion that '…all social relations involve power relations' (2005:537).

Positioning power relations that are themselves borne out of human interaction on any stage has a pertinent and potent effect, for it interacts with the athlete's learning, knowledge and subsequent development as a performer (Cushion, 2011a). Given the significant role of the coach in developing these interacting aspects of athlete development (Cushion et al., 2006; Mageau and Vallerand, 2003), it would be appropriate to call for more work to explore and deconstruct both the coaching process and the coach-athlete relationship(s). At the same time, a more critical reading is required that not only exposes the complexities of the coach-athlete relationship(s) and the coaching process they are engaged in, but also locates their central activities within its environment and context.

Paradoxically, although power is an essential element of this relationship, prior investigations have either ignored it or have produced one-dimensional, limiting and limited interpretations that call for re-evaluation (Jowett, 2003; 2017; Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007; Kidman, 2005). By exploring the development and evolution of the coach-athlete relationship(s), there is room to challenge existing interpretations of power in sports coaching. Despite a limited number of authors producing empirical work to illuminate the situation (e.g. Cushion and Jones, 2006; Jones et al., 2004; Potrac et al., 2002; 2007; Potrac and Jones, 2009; 2011), research is broadly interpretative and takes a micro-political view. These readings of power could be criticised as being too narrow in their focus and application therefore failing to take a critical perspective that would allow a more challenging and multidimensional approach to power relations. Conversely, other authors are starting to adopt a broadly critical approach to the study of power relations within coaching practice and in the exploration of the coach-athlete relationship(s). In this vein, Andrews and Silk (2012), Denison (2007; 2010), Markula (2004), Markula and Pringle (2006), Mills and Denison (2013; 2018), and Taylor and Garratt[1] (2010a) have adopted a poststructuralist methodology or a critical analysis that facilitates a more challenging and complex approach to the study of power relations within sport.

By readdressing the paucity of research regarding power in contemporary writing, my research will (re)locate coaching as a disputed and political enterprise characterised by strategy, struggle, co-operation and co-dependence (Jones et al., 2004; Potrac and Jones, 2011). Consequently, by focusing on sports coaching and the exploration of the coach-athlete relationship(s), it is my aim to illuminate some of the more evasive elements of the complex interactions between sport and

---

[1] In the original work by Taylor and Garratt (2010a), Garratt's name was misspelt by the journal editor as 'Garrett' and has been cited as such many times. It has since been corrected electronically and I have used the correct spelling of his name in this thesis.

power that Hargreaves (1986:3) so eloquently presents:

> We are going to argue that sport, in specific circumstances is an important, if highly neglected constituent of power structures and that the reproduction of the sport-power relation is systematically concealed in the routine operation of that relation.

Background rationale

The wider context

> The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in Physics. Like energy, power has many forms, such as wealth, armament, influence on opinion (Russell, 1938:10).

Russell's conception of power is a useful starting point from which to engage with the wider social manifestation, operation and consequences of power. Here, power is described as an all-embracing component of social interaction and related behaviours. It infuses the social world and takes many guises. Yet, despite its ubiquitous nature, power actively defies interpretation and resists definition (Clegg, 1989; Lukes, 2004). The implication here is that its complexity makes it difficult to study, as illustrated by French and Raven's view that 'The processes of power are pervasive, complex and often disguised in our society' (1959:150). Thus, power has been seen as a blunt tool of influence and control (Dahl, 1968; Machiavelli, 1532; Weber, 1921), and also as having refined, multifaceted, relational, and multidimensional levels of significance and consequence (Foucault, 1978; Hargreaves, 1986; Westwood, 2002).

A further challenge is that power has fostered a plurality of voices from diverse social fields including economics, political science, psychology and sociology, thus contributing to the different ways in which power has been explored and applied (Baldwin, 1978; 2012). In terms of the coach-athlete relationship(s), most authors have approached the area from a broadly psychological behavioural position (Jowett, 2007; 2009; Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007;

Lafrenière et al., 2011; Margeau and Vallerand, 2003; Poczwardowski et al., 2006; Sandström et al., 2016; Stebbings et al., 2016) with occasional Foucauldian intervention (Barker-Ruchti and Tinning, 2010; Denison, 2007; Johns and Johns, 2000; Mills and Denison, 2013; Gearity and Mills, 2012; Markula and Pringle, 2006; Taylor et al., 2017).

Problematising power

'Power, like love is easier to experience than to define or measure' suggests Nye (1990:177). Nevertheless, just because something is elusive or challenging, it should not be ignored; nor should contemporary researchers shy away from attempts to study or conceptualise it. This complexity is illustrated in the *Encyclopaedia of Power* (Dowding, 2011) which frames power in a multitude of ways, including, but not limited to, power in relation to cognition and behaviour, power as control theory, power as influence, power as prize, power to and power over, and power to initiate action, and power to prevent action. In addition, power is defined as imperial, bureaucratic, political, structural, religious and social. To try to encapsulate the phenomenon in a single definition is deeply problematic. Nevertheless, Dowding attempts this:

> Power can be personal, social, or institutional. It can involve conflict where one forces another to behave in ways the second does not wish, or can be consensual where agents achieve more together than that they could alone. It can be thought of as a property of people or institutions or other social objects (2011:xxiii).

To explore further and to set out the manifest issues with defining such a difficult concept, Philp (1996) acknowledges that 'Definitions of power are legion' (657).

He continues:

> To the extent that there are any commonly accepted formulation, power is understood as concerned with the bringing about of consequences. But attempts to specify the concepts more rigorously have been fraught with disagreements. There are three main sources of the disagreements: different disciplines within the social sciences emphasise different bases of power (for example wealth, status, knowledge, charisma, force and authority); different forms of power (such as influence, coercion, and control); and different uses of power (such as individual or community ends, political ends and economic ends) (Philp, 1996:657).

It is, therefore, not surprising that this all-encompassing, polysemic word with its many layers, connotations and inferences has been treated as a key concept for many thinkers in the Western world, from ancient history through to late capitalism. Power engaged the early Greek philosophers, was a fundamental concern to Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Hobbes (1588-1679), and was a crucial aspect of the work of Weber, Giddens, Foucault and Clegg operating in the twentieth century (Westwood, 2002). I contend that the notion of power actively calls for continuous attention and accompanied redefinition as it continues to engage writers in the new millennium (Fiske, 2010; Magee and Smith, 2013).

Despite a multiplicity of interpretations and meanings offered, a number of definitions of power share a common characteristic of power; that of being the potential to influence or cause an effect. This is illustrated by Weber (1921:162) who argues that:

> Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.

This position is central to much writing on power, with the current debate being centred on the means to enable, make societal actions possible, or to act to constrain or prevent actions (Blader and Chen, 2012). Additionally, central to these discussions are the ways in which power is understood being grounded in the type of power that it involves (modalities) and the social spaces (sites of power) where it

is applied (Potrac and Jones, 2011; Westwood, 2002). Specifically, how power is interpreted and enacted between and within different organisations, institutions, individuals, bodies, cultures, and nations, and how these understandings of power change throughout history becomes a compelling area of study.

Due to the plurality of meaning, greater understanding can be fostered if the researcher discloses their relationship with power, including how they interpret its meaning and its operation. Nevertheless, it is not within the remit of this research to evaluate, as other writers have done, the work on power across the academic disciplines, nor is it to provide a systemic analysis on the philosophy of power. For a wider explanation, see Clegg (1989), Lukes (2004) or Westwood (2002). This research will instead take a critical sociological perspective to examine how power has been treated in the social sciences, borrowing from, but not limited to, nursing, psychology, social work, education, and sports coaching literature. Although power has been treated somewhat differently across the disciplines, common interwoven interpretations of power do arise, including the ability to influence or control the behaviour of people and/or resources and when power is defined as having a capacity or being an entity or a property.

Despite the wealth of interpretations available, social power is often defined as asymmetric control over valuable resources in social relations (Keltner et al., 2003; Magee and Galinsky, 2008). Magee and Smith (2013) corroborate this position and maintain the centrality of power within social relationships, specifically in circumstances involving restricted assets. Variables such as social stratification, gender, ethnicity, hierarchy and status also interact in ways that add colour and complexity to an already heady mix of the social and personal (Blader and Chen 2012; Fiske, 2010). Authors are considering power in relation to others where the power-holder's control is a matter of degree and operates in comparison to each party's control over their own outcomes (Fiske, 2010). Yet it is the notion of interdependence within power relations that has increasing potency within the

social sciences. As Fiske (2010:942) argues:

> …inter-dependence describes people's patterns of control within a dyadic relationship, that is in what ways they need each other (or not) to attain valued goals.

A critique that could be levelled at these works is that they are often tied to the notion of micro-interactions and ignore the wider socio-politico macro forces that structure even the most basic of human interactions. Thus, Fiske's choice of the phrase 'dyadic relationship' betrays her lack of understanding of the complexities of interaction between interested stakeholders and limits what interpretation can be drawn from these exchanges. Furthermore, the relationships and interactions studied are often situated within a social vacuum and take the view of power as being possessive, repressive and linked to manipulation and strategy (Blader and Chen 2012; Dunbar and Burgoon, 2005). From a sports coaching perspective, some empirical studies (e.g. Groom et al., 2012; Rylander, 2015; Turman, 2006) have looked to the seminal French and Raven (1959) model as a framework for understanding power. Whilst this has the advantages of simplicity and straightforwardness, this perspective on power is socio-psychological in nature (Rylander, 2015) and does not account for the impact of wider social or cultural forces such as the family, governmentality, social class, mass media, age, gender and ethnicity. This is a view that this work seeks to actively challenge and by doing so, to explore the deeper connotations of power, specifically within power relations between individuals.

What of the alternative views on power?

Given the plurality of the different interpretations of power within the social sciences, we should be wary of accepting one-dimensional or simplistic workings of power to frame our understanding. Doing so may limit our consideration and perception of social processes, including the way in which we navigate our collective, many-faceted and layered social world. For power to take on more sophisticated notions of meaning and significance, it is to the work of power

theorists such as Foucault, Bourdieu, Elias, Blau, Giddens and Mann that I turn when proposing alternative readings of power. For me, an appropriate view of power comes from Hargreaves who, in his work on the sport-power nexus, refers to it as a:

> …relationship between agents, the outcome of which is determined by agents' access to relevant resources and their use of appropriate strategies in specific conditions of struggle with other agents (Hargreaves, 1986:3).

It is possible to link the genealogy of Hargreaves's thoughts from conventional interpretations such as Dahl's (1957:202-203) idea of power as 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do', to Elias's (1982) view in which he emphasises the relational and processual nature of power.

Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, Norbert Elias was concerned with civilization and the interdependence of power relations. He thought of power as an essential aspect of all human relationships in which power relationships, power balances or 'power ratios' are always present (Hughes, 2008). Power is not seen as being possessional, a thing to hold or wield, as others in the social sciences have done (e.g. Magee and Galinsky, 2008), but rather as a process between individual or groups in which people are bound together by their interdependence. Elias (1978; 1982) developed this concept into his figurations of mutual interdependence which in itself has links to Mann's (2012) networks of intersecting power structures (Stones, 2008). Considering that relationships are socially constructed and unequally distributed (Clegg, 2005), may assist me in furthering my understanding of power in the coaching process.

The idea of power as a relational aspect of social interaction finds expression in the writings of the French poststructuralist[2] Michel Foucault. Observed by many to be the most significant power theorist of the late twentieth century (Gaventa, 2003; Sadan, 1997), Foucault often discussed power according to what it was not and was more interested in its operation as opposed to committing himself to a narrow definition. Thus, for Foucault:

> Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations (Foucault, 1978:94).

This new reading of power is taken up by Westwood (2002:2) who purports that by not treating power '…as a capacity outside and beyond social relations but is constitutive of social relations' situates the phenomenon as always present or immanent and diffused through the fabric of social life. Indeed, it is Foucault's conceptualisation of power as '…*exercised from innumerable points*' (1978:94 emphasis added) that forms a central element of my thesis. Although Foucault's writing and concepts have a reputation of being difficult and contradictory, his ideas and theories are often expressed indirectly and interwoven with his work on other topics (Gaventa, 2003). Writing profusely on multiple subjects he is described by Barth (2008:278) as providing '…a distinct and challenging perspective on the relations between power and subjectivity and the human sciences'. Yet, to understand Foucault's position on power, Gaventa (2003:3) identifies four major areas in which he departs from conventional models of understanding:

> Power is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them.

---

[2] Michael Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher and social historian who was involved in the structuralist and poststructuralist movements of the second half of the twentieth century (Markula and Pringle, 2006). He famously resisted definition and actively rejected labels for himself. His own words, 'Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same' characterises his unease with categorisation (Foucault, 1972:19).

By adopting a Foucauldian-inspired perspective on the convergence of the social world and power, I aim to explore how the modalities of power operate, specifically in the ways in which power and knowledge reproduce each other (Hindess, 1996). I will endeavour to explore and apply this concept further throughout my thesis. Although Foucault has been criticised for favouring the analysis of power relations in society, he '...maintained that fundamental to his project was to understand the role of the individual within changing power relations' (Markula and Pringle, 2006:xi). By emphasising the transient, temporal, contextual elements of power, I consider that Foucault's theorisation offers a potentially valuable and insightful set of concepts through which to examine the negotiated aspect of social life.

Locating sport as an interpersonal and social enterprise: applying the concepts of power

Although I have mapped out a brief exploration of how power has been considered, it is expedient to explore it in relation to a complex, dynamic social activity such as sports coaching (Potrac et al., 2007). To elaborate, when Westwood (2002:25) claims, '...there is no social without power' and when this is applied to coach-athlete relationship(s), the manner in which power operates and manifests itself within a coaching context becomes a potent area for study (Jones et al., 2011; Potrac and Jones, 2009). A more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of power should provide a more thought provoking lens by which to consider the constructed social world (Markula and Silk, 2011) and in particular offer coaches an opportunity to study their own coaching practice and coach-athlete interactions (Jones and Kingston, 2013; Potrac and Jones, 2009). The ability to reflect on practice and to consider wider social factors could also offer coaches a more socially embedded view of coaching (Denison and Avner, 2011; Turman, 2006).

Although theoretical work on power and control within the coaching process has been enlightening (Jones et al., 2002; 2011; Potrac and Jones, 2009; 2011), it has not been applied extensively to empirical studies. Specifically, existing research on the coach-athlete relationship(s) has not probed this aspect of social interaction to give nuanced insights into coaching relationships (Galipeau and Trudel, 2006; Rylander, 2015). My research will focus on a reappraisal of the workings of power as I contend that prior investigations have not given credence to the primacy of power relations (Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004; Lorimer and Jowett, 2009). Furthermore, those who have acknowledged the centrality of power relations have often produced binate, closed, and unambiguous interpretations of power that, I would argue, require re-evaluation (Jones et al., 2005; Jowett, 2007; Kidman, 2001; 2005; Laios et al., 2003). These interpretations of power often result in its construction as a negative, sinister, repressive or abusive force (Brackenridge, 2001; Bergmann Drewe, 2000; Nielsen, 2001; Stirling and Kerr, 2009). By emphasising the operation of power as hierarchical and located solely within the coach-athlete binary, the aforementioned research adds to the dominant discourse - that of power as possessive and presented as a paired dynamic (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998; Jones et al., 2004).

I suggest that by oversimplifying the coaching relationship through presenting power in a certain light, authors such as Kidman (2001; 2005) view power with suspicion, presenting a dualistic interpretation and a static view of leadership. In response to Kidman's empowerment model (2005), Jones and Standage (2006) argued that, despite the coach and athlete performing different roles, they hinge on and influence each other in order to pursue the shared aim of continuous development of the athlete. Thus, because these agents operate in a collaborative context, mutually effecting one another, they are symbiotically entwined and, therefore, negate any presumptions about leadership being represented in just one person (Gronn, 2000). I contend that this restricted Webarian concept of power is too narrow to fully account for its complex operation within society and, when

applied to relationships, does not consider the flux of intersecting social forces within a dynamic interactive frame.

Moreover, a traditional, top-down, reductionist understanding of power is misleading, naïve and may have contributed to the oversimplification of the coaching process, thus problematising the social construction of sporting contexts (Denison and Avner, 2011). The problems referred to include a social construction of the coach that is all knowing without encouraging critical thinking and relies almost entirely on the coach to provide a positive coaching environment. Kidman (2001; 2005), for example, credits the coach with too much agency and presents power as being entirely located within the coach. These inadequate interpretations of power could preserve imbalanced social conditions themselves, ironically contradicting the perceived position of sport as an agent of social change (Green, 2008; Hargreaves, 1986). Focusing purely on the coach is limiting, as Denison and Avner (2011:217) argue that it '…contributes to the social construction of sporting contexts as unproblematic' which, incidentally, acts to continue non-uniform relations of power, '…and therefore marginalise certain individuals, groups, in particular women, people of colour, or other people of "difference"'. Consequently, in view of these shortfalls in the presentation of the coaching process, I argue that an alternative reading of power is required; therefore, this research will adopt the position that power can be observed as a subtle, shifting, complex, temporal, and contextual phenomenon, where one does not possess power, but is instead considered to be relational, referring to an interplay between a number of agents (Elias, 2001; Foucault, 1980; Hargreaves, 1986; Mann, 2012).

It is the relational aspect of coaching that is now being emphasised in current research where coaching is increasingly being (re)presented as a contested, negotiated activity involving a complex interchange between protagonists (Jones et al., 2004; Potrac and Jones, 2009). Some authors (e.g. Potrac and Jones, 2009; 2011) are positioning the processes of power at the centre of the coaching process

by presenting the activity as a '…personal, power-ridden everyday pursuit where the practitioners' management of micro-relations with other stakeholders … form the principal aspect of their duties' (Potrac and Jones, 2009:223-224). Other writers are starting to include within their explanations of effective coaching the value of interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge (Markula and Martin, 2007). Yet despite calls to adopt a more sophisticated view, present discussions of coaching practices and coach-athlete interactions appear to be chiefly dominated by humanistic behavioural psychology (e.g. Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Lorimer and Jowett, 2009) or by a reductionist modelling approach (Abrahams and Collins, 2011; Lyle, 2002) and the wider social and political context is largely ignored.

I contend that the vacuum of material relating to power within the sports coaching literature is partly due to the limited number of active researchers working in the field and the wide range of topics that are being covered. For example, present elements of the coaching landscape include coaching as caring (Jones, 2009; Jones et al., 2013), coaching as an emotional endeavour (Potrac and Marshal, 2011), coaching as exchange (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998), psycho-social treatment of the coach-athlete relationship(s) (Jowett, 2007; 2017; Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007), professionalisation of coaching (Taylor and Garratt, 2010b), coaching and micro-politics (Peel at al., 2013; Potrac and Jones, 2009), coaching as interaction (Birrell and Donnelly, 2004; Ronglan, 2011), coaching practice (Cushion et al., 2006; Potrac et al., 2000; Santos et al., 2013), coach education (Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert and Trudel, 1999; 2004; Jones, 2006b; Salmela and Moraes, 2003), and coaching as pedagogy (Cassidy et al., 2016; Jones, 2006b). Although a handful of authors have produced some empirical work on power in the coaching process (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2007; Purdy et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2016), this is still an underplayed and under-studied component of the coaching process (Cranmer and Goodboy, 2015). Expanding the topic further, diversifying the theoretical framework, inviting an inter-disciplinary approach (social-organisational-cultural) and borrowing from education and the social sciences

would challenge existing views on power and lead to a more refined reading of the coach-athlete relationship(s).

A further criticism that may be levelled against existing work is that the practice of focusing on either athletes or coaches as social actors in the relationship has been dominant and, therefore, perpetuated the individual unit of analysis. This neglects the relationship itself and is not helpful when the phenomena are interpersonal or inter-individual. Specifically, Smith (2013) offers a critique of Jowett and colleagues' work when he suggests that the coach-athlete relationship(s) should be rephrased as the coach-athlete dualism, as the psychological phenomena being studied are located in the individual and not as a result of social relations. By emphasising the psychological and ignoring the sociological, Jowett and colleagues ignore the all-important coaching context where athletes' and coaches' lived experiences and interactions are crucial. If it is that behaviour is only examined through a proposed framework of assumed objective psychological traits that are coded, measured and reduced, then this approach may be of limited use in further exploring this crucial relationship in sport. This is a shortcoming that this research will address by challenging the unidirectional bias of current research and presenting a view where both the coach and athlete are active participants of social interaction involved in a complex web of relations (Poczwardowski et al., 2006; Wylleman, 2000). In addition, my research takes the view that this is not the dyadic relationship that is presented by others (Blom et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2005; Jowett, 2017; Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Frost, 2007; Rylander, 2015). Conversely, I argue that the coach-athlete relationship(s) is subjected to multiple relationships and influences that occur in a much larger sphere. In the case of elite sport, the wider social context becomes significant with the intersection of notable stakeholders and social forces.

When research does investigate complex social interchange between protagonists, further limitations reveal themselves, especially if the research is focused on the minutia of micro-interaction. I suggest that in providing an interesting reading of the micro-political world of coaching, some authors (Hall et al., 2016; Potrac and Jones, 2009; Thompson et al., 2015) have not duly considered the multi-layered, situational macro-level world that the micro-world exists within. To elaborate, it could be valuable to contemplate the exchanges between protagonists as not occurring within a closed dyad, but rather in the larger social sphere at the nexus between politics and other social forces. It is thus my intention to move between the macro and the micro aspects of social research, to recognise the influence of significant political forces and face-to-face interactions that influence, and are influenced in turn, by an extensive web of relations between parties. I aim to move away from presenting the coach-athlete relationship as a dyad in which power is only embedded between the two actors. In contrast, I seek to locate these potent power relationships within the social sphere where multiple relationships intersect and are considered. These may include, but are not limited to, other coaches and athletes, support personnel, athlete systems managers, sporting agents, sponsors, physiotherapists, administrative sports body personnel, and funding agents in a *rhizomatic* fashion where context, agency and situational factors are key. In doing so, I hope to be able to move between a '…diversity of standpoints from which knowledge can be constructed' (Stones, 2008:21) to produce a more varied and rich interpretation of the workings of power within the coach-athlete relationship(s). The field is becoming increasingly aware of the significance of power and its incarnations to sociological study with the argument that is central to understanding the strains between a person's self-rule (agency) and the macro-forces that influence a person's thoughts and behaviours (structure) (Mathews et al., 2013).

In addition, it is my intention to reject the view that coaching occurs in a social vacuum, nor does it operate as the mechanistic, unidirectional, sequential activity criticised by contemporary authors (Cushion et al., 2003; Jones, 2000; Jones and Wallace, 2005). Instead, my research will position coaching as a dynamic, social activity that considers the fluid exchanges between athletes, coaches, and others in the wider social context. By allowing for the concepts of struggle, strategy, cooperation and diplomacy, I hope to locate the evolving coach-athlete relationship(s) within the broader public arena and to make explicit the nexus between the personal, the political and the social (Jones and Kingston, 2013).

In the case of elite sport, what may exist as a private exchange between coach, athlete or significant stakeholder can take on new meanings and levels of consequence when played out on the public stage. Thus, this research will invoke a broadly poststructural approach where location, situation, and context is deemed critical as it is the situatedness of these dynamic, fluid, and changeable relationships that become of interest. Rather than offering a static and closed definition of power, I have certain sympathies to how it could be conceptualised. By examining power that is itself illustrated by shifting patterns of influence and control, power can be argued as being relational and not centrally located (Foucault, 1978), diffuse and de-centred (Westwood, 2002), processual and not possessive (Elias, 1982) and positive and not solely repressive (Nietzsche, cited in Deleuze, 1962). Equally, by emphasising the temporal and ephemeral nature of power within the coach-athlete relationship(s), a more fluid appreciation of its workings and consequences might be offered.

Moreover, I contend that acknowledging the context, environment and situation of these relationships is important, as previous research has tended to homogenise coaching, thus diluting a meaningful interpretation of power. The creation of a trans-contextual reading of coaching is, therefore, very difficult as coaching resists grand theorising. It is important to distinguish between such polarities of performance coaching, participant coaching, individual sports and team sports, and

mass spectator sports and other less well-known sports as the power dynamics and mechanics of interaction may well vary (Lyle, 2002). Consequently, I offer that issues of power in individual sports at the elite level have not been adequately theorised and explored. Existing work on power in a coaching context has focused on team sports such as football (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2007) and rowing (Purdy et al., 2008). To help ameliorate this shortfall, my research will focus on the operation of power in coach-athlete relationship(s) within elite level athletics in the UK.

Elite athletics in context

The next section offers a brief overview of the cultural history of athletics in the UK and how it sits in the contemporary landscape to provide colour and context to my research. Whilst issues of class, gender and ethnicity are of interest, my research is not specifically concerned with these issues. Subsequently, after presenting some of the organisational, fiscal and political aspects of high-performance athletics, this part will lead into an overview of my research itself, presenting aims, objectives and participants with a summary rationale.

Historical overview of athletics in the UK

Athletics in the pre-modern form has existed in the UK for centuries, varying from folk games and festivities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the celebrated rural athletics meetings (such as the Highland Games and Boarder Games), during the eighteenth century, to running races and pedestrianism, conducted throughout the nineteenth century (Whannel, 1983). According to Bale (2003), strongly tied to the development of athletics in the modern form, is the role of amateurism in the transition from folk games to codified athletics. The resulting conflict between working class professionalism and the newly emerging middle class ethos of the amateur coach and athlete of the mid-nineteenth century, resulted in the establishment of athletics along class lines (Day, 2013a; Day et al.,

2013). Amateurism was a fiercely protected ideal and according to Day et al. (2013:141) '…was at the heart of shaping Britain's coaching heritage.' The influence of amateurism as a social practice was enshrined by the creation of the Amateur Athletic Club (AAC)[3] in 1866, differentiating between gentleman amateurs and professional runners (Horne et al., 2012). Scholars such as Mangan (1981) and Macintosh (1979) emphasise social position as key and amateur status was represented by ideals of fair play, not being paid to play, losing gracefully and wining with style.

Nonetheless, to present the history of athletics and the influence of amateurism in such straightforward terms is problematic, as authors such as Day (2013b) and Day and Carpenter (2015) contend that these issues were fractious and highly complex '…with considerable leakage around the margins of amateur hegemony with respect to the employment of professional coaches' (Day, 2013b). Values and ideals appeared to be more fluid with an interchange of qualities and blurring of status. Other scholars such as Holt (1989) and Horne et al. (2012) contend that class notions were still structured along the lines of the elite, as participants were mainly from privileged backgrounds.

As athletics and athletics sporting structures proliferated in the first half of the twentieth century, (including a strong movement from women's athletics[4] that developed separately from men's), they became more fragmented and complex (Robinson, 1996; Williams, 2020). Furthermore, this period was accompanied by rapid social change and increased social mobility, with associated political, economic and voluntary interests all vying for the attention and control of British sports (Mangan, 1981). Amateurism came under pressure and in the second half of the twentieth century the evolution of the structure, organisation and purpose of international sport changed the landscape of athletics in the UK (Allison and

---

[3] The name changed to the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) from 1880 (Horne et al., 2012).
[4] The Women's Amateur Athletic Association (WAAA) was created in 1922 (Robinson, 1996).

Monnington, 2005; Day and Carpenter, 2015). Horne et al. (2012) suggests that during the 1960 and 70s, athletics started to free itself from amateurism, embrace commercial forces and usher in a new form of professionalism. Indeed, Allison (2012) identifies '…the decline of amateurism [from] 1961 to 1995', where a confusing period of 'shamateurism' in athletics and other sports reigned. Throughout the 1980s and 90s athletics saw increased commercialism and the creation of the British Athletics Federation (BAF)[5] in 1991 exemplified the transition into a new era (Lister, 2011). From 1997, prize money was offered by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)[6], and UK Sport began to fund athletes to prepare them for the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games.

Perhaps one particular consequence of this transition is that socio-economic class divisions were eroded further, as athletics became increasingly egalitarian in terms of participation (Allison, 2012). By way of contrast, Hargreaves (1986) offers that coaches, administrators and GB personnel, were still predominantly middle class, perpetuating a sporting hegemony that had its origin in Oxbridge and public schools. In addition, scholars such as Carrington (2010) and Hall (1996a) observe that while black athletes may have achieved success on the athletics track, they are underrepresented in coaching positions and in the executive boardrooms. I offer this brief history to try to account for UK athletics' move towards professionalism, but to also make sense of the sometimes confusing legacy and attitude towards notions of athleticism, amateurism and artisans of the sport.

---

[5] The merger of the AAA and the Women's AAA, led to the creation of the British Athletics Federation (BAF) in 1991 (Lister, 2011).

[6] The IAAF was the global Governing Body for athletics until 9th June 2019, whereupon it changed its name to World Athletics (World Athletics, 2019).

Volunteerism, power and coaching

Although a detailed treatise on the background to volunteerism as it relates to sports coaching is not within the remit of my research, it is perhaps pertinent to locate it as a function of power in relation to sport (Taylor and Garratt, 2010a). In addition, the historical legacy of British attitudes to coaching at the elite level has its roots in volunteerism and amateurism, impacting on attempts to professionalise coaching (Day et al., 2013). Furthermore, the importance of volunteerism in the development of the UK sports coaching scene (including athletics) at participation level and community-based sport have been explored by other authors (Cronin and Armour, 2015; Donnelly and Harvey, 2020; Gale and Ives, 2019). As a socially embedded practice, Taylor and Garratt (2010a) have portrayed voluntary sports coaching as a culturally valuable activity across all levels. Moreover, compelling work on meaningfulness in coaching by Ronkainen et al. (2020) have suggested that younger coaches conceived volunteering as a vehicle for curriculum vitae building and professional development, whereas older volunteers reported more altruistic reasons for coaching.

Consequently, I offer that together with Harvey et al. (2007) that there is a significant relationship between sports volunteerism and social capital, in which power is a function of the coach's position. Furthermore, as many athletic coaches do not draw down economic capital, I suggest that power is culturally located as sporting capital as a status element. I suggest that this may account for the coaching demographic of athletics coaches in the UK as white, male and middle class (Long et al., 2007) in which coaching is performed in the individual's leisure time, whilst pursuing a career elsewhere. This has powerful implications for coaching opportunities for women and ethnic minorities who are limited by their time, constrained by lower wages and marginalised by unequal practices and lack of opportunities in GBs and coach education (Norman, 2010). Indeed the underrepresentation of women coaches is symptomatic of what Norman (2008:460) terms '…structural inadequacies' and '…evidence of the patriarchal

control of sport'. In particular she argues that fewer coaching opportunities, and limited personal and professional provision negatively affect women's recourse to power in coaching, perpetuating existing patterns. Similarly, Burton (2015) suggests that even though sports participation opportunities for women and girls have increased, these figures do not translate to sports leadership. It will be interesting to see if the appointments in 2020 of Joanna Coates as UK Athletics' new chief executive (Bloom, 2020), Sara Symington as performance director and former British sprinter Christian Malcom as the new head coach (Roan, 2020a) may remedy these gendered and ethnically structured inequalities.

Contemporary elite athletics in the UK

In recent years, Great Britain's (GBR) athletes have made significant advances in developing their talents and becoming an elite presence on the world stage of international competition. The performances at the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, in which British track and field athletes won six medals, and at the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games, where seven medals were won, are reflective of this success (York, 2016). This accomplishment is paralleled with the increasing financial support that UK Athletics (UKA)[7] receives from UK Sport (UKSP),[8] together with the introduction of National Lottery Funding in 1995 (Garrett, 2004). In the 12 years prior to London 2012, UKA saw investment from UKSP increase two and half times from £10,600,000 for the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games cycle to £26,824,206 for the 2012 London Summer Olympic cycle (UK Sport, 2015b). Athletes who are deemed with the potential to win medals can secure funding through the British Athletics World Class Performance Programme (WCPP) or

---

[7] Formed in 1999, UKA is the legally recognised Governing Body (GB) for athletics in the UK (Burrell, 2006).
[8] UK Sport (UKSP) is the government agency responsible for funding Olympic and Paralympic sport in the UK. It is financed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (UK Sport, 2015a).

British Athletics Futures Programme (Futures) together with their respective coaches (Burrell, 2015a).

It is no coincidence that British success in Olympics sports in general since the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games, can be partly attributed to the significant changes to the way that elite sport is funded (Nevill et al., 2009) as well as in the substantial changes to the structure, organisation and aims of sporting Governing Bodies (GBs) (Houlihan and Chapman, 2015). The changing relationship between the government and sporting GBs, illustrated by dramatic changes to UK elite sports policy, meant increased financial accountability and transparency in the workings of organisations like the UKA. This means that due to the use of public money for elite sport, GBs and the British Olympic Association (BOA) are required to publish their financial statements each year (UK Athletics Limited, 2015) and are subject to review by the National Audit Office (Shibli et al., 2013). In terms of figures that are most likely to resonate with the British public, each athletic medal at the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games cost UKSP £4,191,333 (Couvée, 2012). Due to monies ultimately coming from the public purse, there is increasing pressure to convert cash into sporting success and so athletes and their coaches find themselves coming under mounting scrutiny, with their performances inextricably bound by the social as well as organisational, political, and economic forces. As a consequence of these interrelated and influential forces, the coach-athlete relationship(s) becomes increasingly interesting as a vehicle from which to study the temporal and relational power dynamics between agents.

Overview of my research

Research aims and focus

My research will take a postmodern and poststructural approach, adopting qualitative research methodologies where space, temporal understanding, and context are important. Specifically, I intend to use postmodernism to guide to my research activities in the field and to provide a set of principles that will inform my writing style and presentation of data (Richardson, 2000a). In addition, I will also be using poststructuralism in concert with a postmodernist approach that incorporates poststructuralist approaches to power as a theoretical framework (Markula and Silk, 2011). The research focus itself is concerned with the complexity and evolution of the elite coach-athlete relationship(s), focusing on the concepts of power, interaction, and politics as its main themes. More specifically, these foci are explicitly realised in the following three research aims (RA):

RA 1 - To contribute to the understanding of sports coaching being a contested enterprise, a negotiated arena where parties use power, dependence, cooperation and collaboration to define, challenge and re-define their relationship(s).

RA 2 - To examine the intricacies of the coach-athlete relationship(s) from a sociological perspective, through which to seek to understand how coaches and athletes negotiate power relations. Specifically, to investigate physical culture in high-performance sport and how power manifests itself in training practices, perspectives and politics.

RA 3 - To probe existing models of the coach-athlete relationship(s) by moving conceptual understandings away from it being a binary, personalised and fundamentally closed relationship. In doing so, this research will explore the power exercised by GB systems, funding agents, sponsors, athlete system managers, selection committees, and other stakeholders as it relates to the coach-athlete relationship(s).

Objectives

In order to achieve these three interrelated aims, I will be adopting a qualitative inspired methodology and approach to the research procedure. In doing so I will:

1. Consult the existing literature on development and evolution of the coach-athlete relationship(s), focusing on the concepts of power, control, and politics.

2. Undertake targeted pilot work in recruiting and interviewing four high-performance athletes and four high-performance coaches.

3. Utilise a purposeful sampling technique for the selection and successful recruitment of 35 high-performance UK[9] athletes, coaches or athlete systems managers (15 in each group).

4. Use the findings of the pilot studies and detailed preparatory work to feed into the production of a sequence of 35 semi-structured interviews with high-performance UK athletes, coaches, or athlete systems managers.

5. Transcribe, analyse and create readings of interview data according to methods deemed most appropriate in accordance with a poststructural approach.

I expect that these objectives will be intimately connected and build on each other, layering my understanding. Consequently, I anticipate that my immersion and research into qualitative research methods and processes will feed into a more nuanced exposure to poststructural and postmodern schools of thought, philosophy and practice. Described by St. Pierre (2011) as a lose collection of diverse theories and practices, these approaches are difficult to articulate as they resist definition or categorisation. Yet Markula and Silk (2011) suggest that the terms overlap in their paradigmatic assumptions which reject universal

---

[9] Athletes who compete for the nation under the full title of 'The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' are systematically referred to as UK athletes or GBR athletes in this thesis. In international competition, UK athletes are described as representing GBR. Furthermore, at the Olympic Games athletes from the UK are collectively described as belonging to Team GB.

metanarratives, critique dualistic interpretations of power and are sceptical towards the humanist self. I hope to utilise these approaches in my work in which I am sensitive towards notions of subjective realities and take the position that knowledge is co-created in concert with others. Notwithstanding the similarities, I will not be using the terms poststructuralism and postmodernism interchangeably, but aim to show how the terms are differentiated and specifically appropriated in my research. In particular, I will be using postmodernist sensibilities that influence the research methodology and methods as presented in Chapters VI and VI. Specifically, I will take postmodernist approaches that together with Schostak (2006) and Scheurich (1997) frame the interview as a contested field of interaction in which my role as the researcher is complicit, politicised, and problematised. Indeed, I intend to incorporate postmodernism's engagement with stylistic approaches, reflexivity, representation and emerging ethical issues throughout, but most notably in Chapters III, VII and VIII (Richardson, 1994; 2000a; Wolcott, 2001).

Correspondingly, my research will be significantly influenced by poststructural notions of power, language, meaning and subjectivity. In particular, I will be using power as an overarching theoretical framework that seeks to illuminate the coach-athlete relationship(s) as a unique social construction. My approach hopes to demonstrate how power is an instrumental, yet diffuse and relational element of these accords that are themselves situated in the rarefied world of elite athletics. These poststructural interpretations of power, such as Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980) and other critical theorists (Hargreaves, 1986; Westwood, 2002) are active in the theoretical construction of my thesis throughout. These aspects are prominent in Chapters IV, V and VI.

In consideration of these elements together with reflection of the issues presented in the research introduction, I will provide structure, subplots and points of interest. In turn, I expect new ways of knowing to be engendered and the development of research skills involved in planning, performing and processing the pilot studies will help me inform the construction and development of the

interview process including interview design and wording of the actual questions (Roulston, 2010a). Further refinement and evolution of the interview stages would occur through my continually engaging with the previous objectives together with reflecting on earlier interviews to build up a layered and textured data set. In doing so, I would anticipate a certain amount of fluidity within the research methodology, continually moving back and forth across the research process (Pelias, 2011). Thus, rather than being linear in terms of development, I will build reflexivity, researcher position and critical commentary that is hermeneutical in nature into my research (Scwhandt, 2000; Tracy, 2013). The method of building up a rich data set from multiple perspectives constructed over five years, potentially cumulating in to what Ellingson (2009) terms 'dendritic crystallisation', will bring a level of authenticity and meaning making through multiple forms of analysis to build up a complex picture of relationships.

Participants

Originally, I had anticipated basing my thesis on elite athletes and coaches within the UK Athletics Framework. In order to satisfy the varied conception of what makes an 'elite' athlete or coach (Mallett and Hanrahan, 2004; Nash et al., 2012), the participants selected for the study would be either athletes on the British Athletics WCPP or Futures Programme together with their respective coaches (Burrell, 2015a). The WCPP is a UK Sports National lottery funded initiative which supports delivery of success at Olympic and Paralympic Events. At the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics, for example, the aim of WCPP is to win medals for Team GB and for long term growth for the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics and beyond. The athletes chosen would be expected to reach the podium of major championships,

or have podium potential. This overlaps with Mallett and Hanrahan's (2004) definition of 'elite' which includes athletes who have '…finished in the top ten at a major championship in track and field in the last six years' (2004:189)[10]. The Futures Programme is British Athletics support programme that underpins the WCPP and is representative of UKA's drive towards more targeted funding for athletes and their coaches. Rather than the money coming from the National Lottery, this is supported entirely by UKA (Burrell, 2015b). This creates a large pool of potential candidates for study selection with 50 coach-athlete pairings on the WCPP and a further 34 coach-athlete pairings on the Futures Programme (Burrell, 2015a; 2015c).

Over the course of my research, however, the inclusion criteria have changed to include high-performance athletes and coaches as well as those competing at elite level. The decision to include a larger pool of athletes and coaches together with individuals from various sporting bodies, including England Athletics, Scottish Athletics, Athletics Northern Ireland[11] and UK Anti-Doping Agency (UKAD) was driven by access, opportunity, and perspective. From a practical perspective, as an 'outsider' to the exclusive world of elite athletics, I have few opportunities to take advantage of a personal network to gain access to this relatively closed and hard to reach cohort (Berg, 2001; Tracy, 2013). Subsequently, by widening my search criteria I can use specifically targeted 'gatekeepers' to increase my chances of gaining an 'in', thereby developing my connections and adding value to my credentials (Kim, 2011; Silk, 2005). For the purposes of this research, I have defined 'high-performance' as:

> (A) any athlete with a national ranking who has competed for either Great
> Britain and Northern Ireland (GBR) or any of the four countries of the UK.

---

[10] Technically, I have defined 'elite' to denote the highest level performers (Mallett and Hanrahan, 2004). I have used the term 'high-performance' to include athletes both in the elite category and in the next tier of performance down to include those athletes with a national vest. Subsequently, for the purposes of my study I will use both 'elite' and 'high-performance' interchangeably to describe my research participants, both in terms of a definition and description.
[11] Together with Welsh Athletics, the first three bodies mentioned comprise the Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs) (Burrell, 2009).

They may or may not have funding from the WCPP or Futures Programme. Athletes from any track and field event will be considered alongside multi-eventers, road runners or from cross-country,

(B) any athletics coach working with any high-performance GBR athlete, including those athletes who have represented any of the home countries of the UK.

Furthermore, rather than just limiting my cohort to athletes and coaches, I endeavoured to embrace specific stakeholders within athletics, such as performance managers, sport science support and members of aligned sports bodies. If my research is to focus on the wider power networks that surround the athletes and coaches, then it would be pertinent to include perspectives and insights from those influential protagonists. This aspect in itself makes this study unique as the influence and interaction of selection policies, funding structures and organisational politics on the coach-athlete relationship(s) have not been studied from a power relationship perspective before.

Positioning the research

Despite the introduction of new ways of looking at the social workings of power, it could be suggested that both social science and sports coaching research has continued to revert to Weber's (1921), Lukes's (2004) or Dahl's (1957) interpretation and their treatment (or portrayal) of power as binary and coercive. I would contend that this inability or reluctance to take on board more inclusive analyses of power has devalued the potency of current coaching research and failed to add to the body of knowledge that seeks to critically understand the coaching process and the coach-athlete relationship(s).

A more carefully nuanced application of the diffuse, pervasive and subtle operations of power as a relational aspect of the coaching process would throw the interactions of coach and athlete into sharp relief, offering critical insights into how agents negotiate exchanges and navigate the world around them. Specifically, this body of work seeks to move towards a reading of power that is contextualised and contested, temporal and spatial. It is the shifting elements of power that contributes towards the evolving coach-athlete relationship(s) that is itself comprised of fluid interactions within a social sphere that forms the basis of this study. Put differently, a key element pervading this study is the rejection of the coach and athlete working within a closed dyad, (Jowett, 2007; Jowett and Cockerill, 2003) but rather as part of a social unit involving a number of relationships, interactions and roles. In doing so, the focus moves from the personal account to the political. If wider political forces are considered (such as GB pressures, funding issues, and performance system dynamics), then exploring these extended power networks could yield deeper insights into the coach-athlete relationship(s). By including reference to elite sport politics, dominant discourses, other athletes, influential stakeholders, social support systems, institutions and intersecting micro-personal and macro-political forces such as ethnicity, gender and social class, the non-possessive elements of power that surround the coach and athlete can be explored more carefully.

This research, therefore, seeks to address the workings of power in a sports coaching context using the coach-athlete relationship(s) as a vehicle from which to observe, explore and critically examine how power relations operate. A key element of this endeavour is to investigate what enables actors to influence each other and to explicate how power bases and modalities act in concert to magnify or nullify aspects of the interaction(s) in question. This work is important in the contemplation of a more socially responsible view of coaching grounded in ethical considerations.

In order to give colour and context to the fluid relations of power within elite sport, the following Chapter traces a real-world example from British Cycling. Like athletics, cycling has earned international prestige and demonstrated global success through the meticulous application of its elite sports programme; for example, at the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games, the British track cycling team won 11 medals, six of which were gold. Furthermore, every member achieved at least one medal (Yorke, 2016). Against this backdrop, I highlight the case of Jess Varnish, an Olympian and member of British Cycling's elite performance squad, who in 2016 accused the sport's GB of overseeing a culture of bullying and sexism within its coaching programme. Although not located in athletics, the story is important as it provides an example of the operation, movement, and appropriation of power in elite sport. In addition, it provides a contextual illustration of power relations as having situational and temporal elements that are potent and have implications far beyond the coach-athlete relationship(s) in isolation.

What follows is a reading of power in which the perceived power-dependent cyclist is able to challenge, interrupt and eventually disrupt the workings of a significant and authoritative flagship GB. In it, I show how power that may be invested in specific bodies or people is far from fixed, but rather alters in their relational capacities. Specifically, I explore how Varnish, an intelligent, articulate Olympian, in response to being suddenly dropped from the funding programme and track team, launched a counter attack on figures within British Cycling. This in turn set off a cascade of events resulting in the suspension and resignation of its Technical Director, sparking a variety of reviews and inquiries which called into question unethical coaching practices. Furthermore, I offer the Jess Varnish Chapter as an example of the wider forces of power which are presented along gendered lines. Whilst not being framed specifically by a feminist framework, I contend that intersecting sexual politics can create a potent reading of elite sporting systems, contextualising them (Westwood, 2002).

The story operates on a number of levels, demonstrating how whistleblowing may change the balance of power between athletes and controlling sports bodies. First, it highlights the asymmetries of power inherent in elite sport and the unequal treatments of athletes in the Olympic Programme. Furthermore, institutional power invested in British Cycling and influential figures serves to reinforce their practices and maintain their control over athletes. Third, by leaking reports to the media, Varnish garnered support for her predicament, co-opting the assistance of other powerful public figures and challenging the power base of figures within the GB. In addition, as we move from macro- to micro-relations of power, language becomes important as powerful words are spoken and contested. The voices of athletes become amplified by Varnish and others who have access to the organs of power, denouncing specific elements of the culture of elite sport. At the time of writing, Varnish is now conducting an appeal against losing her employment case against British Cycling in January 2019 (Cary, 2020). The ruling may have significant implications for the employment status of elite athletes in the future and may help to re-define the relationship between GBs and athletes leading towards a change in power relations between parties.

CHAPTER II- THE CASE OF JESS VARNISH: CYCLES OF POWER AND RESISTANCE

On the 27th April 2016, British Cycling's Technical Director, Shane Sutton, resigned his post over allegations of sexism and discrimination initially involving Olympic cyclists Jess Varnish and Darren Kenny (Clarke, 2016). The explosion of media interest that resulted from the unfolding events created a *cause célèbre* out of all parties involved and was the subject of much speculation, allegation and recrimination. The conflict, specifically between Jess Varnish and Shane Sutton, was principally and publicly played out in print, broadcast and online media over eight weeks, coming to a head in the last ten days of April 2016, but continuing to reverberate most of that summer. Not only was it the subject of reporting from specialist cycling media (Wynn, 2016a; 2016b) and online broadcast sports media such as the BBC and Eurosport, it also garnered the interest of the mainstream print media including the broadsheets such as *The Telegraph* (Cary, 2016a) and *The Independent* (de Menezes, 2016), as well as the tabloid newspapers (Kelner, 2016a). Over the course of the incident, other parties added their contributions to the drama which resulted in a media spiral. Subsequently, this involved British Cycling, the sport's GB, and other high profile individuals which, ultimately, put pressure on Sutton leading to his suspension and later resignation from his role at British Cycling (de Menezes, 2016).

Inside track: dissention in the ranks

Events leading up to this public drama started at the beginning of March at the Cycling World Track Championships in London. This was a pivotal event for many British riders as it represented the last chance to qualify for the British Olympic team and several high profile cyclists had yet to meet the selection standard. On 2nd March, after Katy Marchant and Jess Varnish had finished fifth, news broke that they had failed to qualify for the Olympic Games, with Varnish publicly criticising

coaching decisions made by British Cycling. This was widely reported in the online broadsheet media (Cary, 2016a; 2016b; Fotheringham, 2016) and led to an alleged confrontation between the rider and Sutton (Kelner, 2016a). At the end of March, Varnish was dropped from the British team following a performance review, but it was not until a month later that this was widely reported in the media (Cary, 2016a; Kelner, 2016a). On the 19th April, Sutton was reported in *The Telegraph* citing that the decision not to renew the rider's contract had been made '…purely on performance grounds' (Cary, 2016a). Three days later Varnish countered this in a lengthy article in the *Daily Mail* alleging that she was told by Sutton that '…at twenty-five she was "too old" and that she should "move on and get on with having a baby"' during a meeting after being dropped from the Olympic podium programme (Kelner, 2016a). This central piece suggested that the decision not to renew Varnish's contract was a response to her public condemnation of British Cycling and that she had not been informed that her performance was below standard before being dismissed (Kelner, 2016a). Furthermore, Varnish painted a very chauvinistic picture of the culture within British Cycling; an environment in which she '…says she was once told her "ass" was too big' and was subject to other criticisms about her body:

> 'Don't get me wrong, the boys don't get it easy,' she says, 'but I can't imagine him [Sutton] saying something to one of the men about their body shape or telling them to go off and have a baby (Kelner, 2016a).

Other media platforms quickly repeated the story with many reports purporting that Varnish was subjected to statements about her physical appearance and sexist comments from the Technical Director (Ingle, 2016a; Press Association, 2016; Wynn 2016a). Varnish claimed that once she was told that her contract would not be renewed, she attempted to see her performance data which led to British Cycling dropping her from the programme, which was denied. On the 23rd April *The Telegraph Sport* (2016) quoted Varnish:

> I saw Shane [Sutton] and Iain [Dyer] and asked if I could have some of the [performance] information…They couldn't give it to me and said I'd been on the programme too long, that I was too old at the age of 25.

Subsequent news articles reported that '…a toxic culture of fear, nepotism and bullying under Sutton' was prevalent in British Cycling and that he was repeatedly accused of poor conduct, including making 'dirty terrorist' and 'bitches' remarks to riders (Pidd and Ingle, 2016). These responses elicited a plethora of reports, interviews and statements from the 22nd to the 30th April by all parties, including British Cycling, UKSP and the British Athletes Commission. Sutton himself released a statement on the 22nd April denying any wrong doing, justifying the decision to drop Varnish from the podium and declaring that he denied '…that I said or did anything other than act with complete professionalism in my dealings with Jess' (Sutton, 2016). The tone of the statements issued from British Cycling oscillated from support for Sutton to condemnation, resulting in his suspension from his role pending an enquiry and his subsequent resignation a day later (Clarke, 2016). Moreover, the story gathered more strength and weight when other interested stakeholders gathered around the conflicting power bases, exerting influence and amplifying the effects. The double Olympic Champion Victoria Pendleton and Olympic and World Road Race Champion Nicole Cooke quickly offered support to Varnish by the 26th April:

> …alleging institutional sexism and describing a 'culture of fear' within the elite programmes where anyone who dared stick his or her head over the parapet was liable to have it cut off for their pains (Cary, 2016b).

Pedaling discourses in print

Nevertheless, many British riders have verbalised their support for Sutton, including Sir Chris Hoy, multiple World and Olympic Champion. The following statement paying tribute to Sutton posted on Hoy's website was re-printed by *The Guardian*:

> I have never met anyone who gave so much to their role within any team and who cared so much for the performance of the riders. … As a coach, his uncompromising approach yielded unparalleled results for the GB team and his contribution to my career and the entire British Cycling success story was outstanding. For this, I would like to sincerely thank him (Pidd and Ingle, 2016).

Similarly, other riders such as Luke Rowe, Geraint Thomas and Laura Trott have supported Sutton, paying tribute to him and his coaching methods (Pidd and Ingle, 2016). Equally, Mark Colbourne, a decorated British Paralympian '…said he never heard Sutton make disparaging remarks about disabled athletes' (Pidd and Ingle, 2016). Nevertheless, media support for Sutton was balanced with condemnation, as riders were split with claims and counterclaims occurring daily in varying degrees. Writing in *The Telegraph,* Cary (2016c) argued that:

> For every Wiggins who hailed him as the cycling equivalent of Jose Mourinho ("the kind of guy you want in the trenches with you"), there was a Wendy Houvenaghel, who took a rather different view of her former coach ("He's a narcissistic little bully").

Chris Boardman, the 1992 Olympic Champion and World Record holder, has supported Sutton, although this view has been tempered with questions over his suitability for leadership. On Sutton's appointment as Technical Director, Boardman was quoted saying that '…the Australian was "an excellent No 2" but perhaps not the right man to be "the big boss"' (Cary, 2016c). Subsequently, other riders in the British team welcomed news of Sutton's suspension, with the BMX rider Tre Whyte declaring that '…many British riders were terrified of Shane Sutton' and that the '…atmosphere in British Cycling was terrible and senior management was to blame' (Ingle and Pidd, 2016). This was a sentiment echoed by the 2010 World Time Trial Champion, Emma Pooley, who said that '…British Cycling had a wider problem than Sutton' and suggested that British Cycling's ex-Performance Director David Brailsford should be answerable to questions (Ingle and Pidd, 2016). For me, a gear change in the narrative came when Daren Kenny, six-time Paralympic Gold medallist, alleged that Sutton called Paralympians 'gimps' and 'wobblies' (de Menezes, 2016). According to *The Telegraph*, when this story was reported on the 26th April, this was the point of no return for Sutton and he was suspended by British Cycling the next day (Cary, 2016b). The *Daily Mail* ran a parallel story, giving a platform for Kenny's claims that '…members of the disability team [were] referred to in highly derogatory terms by Sutton' (Kelner, 2016b). So serious were these and other allegations, that two separate inquiries were

launched; the first an independent review by UKSP into allegations of sexism and bullying made by Varnish (Ingle, 2016a) and a second internal British Cycling inquiry into other accusations against Sutton (Fotheringham, 2016). Although the results from the investigations were not expected until after the Rio Summer Olympics, reports from UKSP have reached the media, including how the organisation reappraises how elite athletes are treated with a move to abandon its 'win at all costs' mentality (Kelner, 2016c).

Extrapolation and implication for the proposed research

I contend that the resulting media attention in this case illustrates how shifting patterns of power swirl and form, disintegrate and reform in the ripples from the dramatic events. Consequently, I do not offer that power wanes or conversely gains strength, rather that it is in the way that it can be appropriated and exercised by protagonists that leads to these power relations altering in their manifestations and effects (Elias, 1982). Yet power itself has no origin, it is not finite; it is everywhere, immanent (Dyrberg, 1997). Nor is it free floating, rather, as Westwood (2002:6) suggests, it is the '…invisible architecture of the social' and is always present because it is expressed and actualised during the formation of the identities of the protagonists involved. Thus, it has to be enacted in interchanges between individuals, groups or other organisations and, most pertinently, results in a continual renegotiation and expression of the asymmetric power balance characterised by the two main actors above (i.e. Sutton and Varnish). Furthermore, it is articulated and echoed by other individuals and bodies in this process, thereby substantiating my argument that power is not fixed, nor is it located within one party (Foucault, 1978).

This cycling example is illustrative of how the locus of power can shift from private exchanges between coach and athlete to the public arena in which people gather round the changing power bases. Once these exchanges occur in public, they increase in potency, resulting in other stakeholders becoming involved and

exerting influence. Furthermore, the pressures of Olympic selection, the nearness to Rio 2016, the power structures of publicly funded sport, and the high profile nature of British Cycling all contributed to the changing power dynamics. Moreover, through co-opting the power of the media, individuals can engage in acts of resistance (Baert and Silva, 2010) contributing to a cascade of events that eventually results in at least two separate inquiries.

Through the tumultuous events at British cycling we see a GB that is dominated by a 'win at all costs' mentality that only values success and sees its athletes as tools to be used in the pursuit for medals (Cunningham, 2017). I suggest that practices resulting in 'marginal gains' are accepted and internalised by the cyclists and, which if left unchallenged, create a skewed culture rendering the athlete docile or at least willing to buy in to the high-performance programme with the normalisation of questionable codes and coaching practices (Shogan, 1999). For many, elite sport is not for the squeamish, demanding total commitment and dedication to the exclusion of many features of normal life (Carless and Douglas, 2013; Warriner and Lavallee, 2008).

Outside track: shifting circuits of power and influence

A year after the initial furore British Cycling continued to find itself at the centre of media attention as the two original inquiries revealed conflicting reports, dissonance and subterfuge (Delves, 2017). For example, the GB has been heavily criticised by UKSP for concealing an internal review conducted after the 2012 London Olympic Games which raised grave concerns over the treatment of cyclists and behaviour of officials within the organisation (Ingle, 2017a). Paradoxically, another news article has made claims that top administrators from UKSP have pressured its independent reviewers from the '… in house governance unit to "go easy" on British Cycling because "that's where the medals come from"' (Ingle, 2017b). Versions of leaked reports and decisions being reversed have vitiated the sport's GB and damaged its reputation with some news reports claiming that

British Cycling had acknowledged that it did '…not pay "sufficient care and attention" to the wellbeing of staff and athletes at the expense of winning medals' (BBC, 2017a).

The same media report discussed the inherent failings of the organisation with British Cycling chiefs, Sir David Brailsford and Shane Sutton, being allowed to create a '…dysfunctional structure' in which a '…culture of fear' was created '…with some staff bullied'. Subsequent news reports document UKSP's '…serious concerns' about the British Cycling Board and '… not being fully informed of the facts' (Press Association, 2017a:). The leaked draft independent report led by Annamarie Phelps, the British Rowing Chair, has been 'scathing' of the actions of British Cycling and the treatment of Varnish, and concludes with:

> The actions of the British Cycling Board in that regard are shocking and inexcusable. They also call into serious question whether the composition of the British Cycling Board is fit to govern a national supporting body (Mehrzad, 2016, cited by the Press Association, 2017a).

I offer the following interpretation to suggest that the consequences of selected UK cyclists' whistleblowing and subsequent investigations may have far-reaching effects and cause significant disruption to the existing power bases of sport within the UK. As British Cycling is a publicly funded body, questions remain to how this money has been used in the single-minded pursuit of medals. Ethics, integrity and the treatment of athletes seems to have been secondary concerns (Cunningham, 2017; Ingle, 2017b).

The year-long *Duty of Care in Sport* report by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, commissioned by the government makes seven recommendations into athlete welfare and makes reference to the its relevance and timely nature given recent media interest, reports and personal accounts from many sports '…has led to questions about whether welfare and safety are really being given the priority they deserve' (Grey-Thompson, 2017:4). The introduction clearly makes the case that sport should not be able to operate outside society's values and norms and that

organisations need to be accountable, especially where public money is concerned. Furthermore:

> Questions are being asked about the price paid for success. It is clear that the drive for success and the desire to win should not be at the cost of the individuals involved. Allegations about the past need to be thoroughly investigated, but the focus must remain on those in the current system to ensure they are protected and free from harm, bullying, harassment and discrimination. Although there are processes and safeguards in place, the right culture is still required to ensure they work (Grey-Thompson, 2017:4).

For me, questions remain over the potency of this document: will it propel a significant change in the culture of elite sport, or will the country's taste for medals continue unabated with elite sporting practices being maintained? Either way, this Chapter documents the multiple ways that power is enacted and expressed in elite sport. If I remain optimistic about the scope of my research, by turning our attention to the manifestation and operation of social power, this could contribute to better and more ethical coaching practices that rather than dominate, protects and develops the athlete (Denison and Avner, 2011).

Influential stakeholders and power bases in flux

Any potential improvements in standards in elite sport may, however, come too late for those forced out or who have exited the WCPP in British Cycling due to sexism, discrimination and the negative social context described previously. As far back as 2012, the triple World Champion and Olympic Silver medallist, Wendy Houvenaghel, was caustic about her treatment from British Cycling during the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games. She claims she was deliberately removed from the winning British pursuit squad on the starting line and was offered no explanation by Sutton (Press Association, 2012). Speaking four years later, she purported that she was '…verbally abused by Sutton' and welcomed his departure from British Cycling stating that it '…could create a less oppressive environment where the culture of fear is removed' (Beacom, 2016). Both her and Varnish's claims of Sutton's use of discriminatory language were upheld by a leaked draft

report of the internal British Cycling investigation (Wynn, 2016b). Although the validity of the rest of the findings have been called into question, Houvenaghel contends that:

> There are certain chosen riders within the team that will not have experienced the culture of fear and not been on the receiving end of that. The bullying, the harassment … being frozen out of opportunities (Wynn, 2017).

Other track and road cyclists have been vocal in their condemnation of the atmosphere within the British cycling and the culture of elite performance, with overt support coming from retired Champions Wendy Houvenaghel, Victoria Pendleton, Nicole Cooke and Emma Pooley (Press Association, 2017b). Pendleton was one cyclist who was very critical of Sutton in the independent review into British Cycling conducted by Annamarie Phelps. She claimed that the '…corrosive culture' forced her out of the sport and that:

> …the way she was treated by Sutton and the culture at British Cycling had played a "big part" in her decision to retire. "I couldn't stay working with these people" (Gibson, 2016).

These corroborative claims are important as they can be seen to be drawn along gendered lines and issued by ex-athletes. As these cyclists have retired from competitive cycling, they may feel they can now use the public platform created by the Varnish/Sutton debacle and the ongoing investigations by British Cycling, UKSP and the DCMS to give extra weight to their accounts and take advantage of the political dimension without retribution from their sport. How these athletes are negotiating public discourse and organisational politics is of particular interest, where multiple actors exert influence by magnifying, intensifying or nullifying multiple power dynamics. Nicole Cooke in particular, has issued several public polemics accusing British Cycling of institutionally entrenched sexism, discrimination and widespread doping allegations, describing the sport as being '…run exclusively by men, exclusively for men' (Lovett, 2017). Her evidence presented to the DCSM Select Committee into the Doping in Sport Inquiry, was interwoven with forceful accusations of British Cycling's discriminatory treatment

of female cyclists and a complete lack of accountability at senior level: '…very little was ever done to support female road riders during my career', and that some cyclists '…would be supported for a period, while they were "in favour", but mostly, that support was only ever transient' (Lovett, 2017). The sport has also been at the centre of a parallel investigation by UKAD with both British Cycling and Team Ineos (the professional cycling team formally known as Team Sky 2010-2019) coming under intense scrutiny (Walker, 2017). Cooke, the first person to win both World and Olympic road race titles in the same year continues:

> Throughout my whole career, BC [British Cycling[12]] senior management and the Board could not have made it more clear to those they directed, that men and the actions and achievements of men, were all that mattered … the facts are they did nothing for women (Cooke, 2017, cited in Lovett, 2017).

Articulate and persuasive, Cooke is unreservedly outspoken about her experiences in the sport, sympathising with Varnish stating '…speak out and your dreams will be destroyed and years of hard work wasted' (Cooke, 2016). The alternative is to keep silent, something that Cooke could not do, systematically documenting the sexism and unequal treatment of riders in her autobiography: *The Breakaway* (Cooke, 2014). Throughout her career she has been labelled 'difficult' and a 'troublemaker' (Lawton and Kelner, 2017) and it is no surprise that some female riders have chosen not to publicly speak out for fear of damaging their prospects within the sport. Nevertheless, Cooke's story could be perceived as a rallying call for active feminism in sport and should have received far more publicity than it did (Stewart and Caudwell, 2017). As *The Breakaway* was published two years before the Varnish and Sutton incident, Stewart and Caudwell (2017) have postulated that it:

> …can be viewed as a political intervention to break the cycle of silence surrounding sexism and is an important model for how to deal with gender trouble in sport. Her example may well have paved the way for Varnish, Pendleton and Armitstead to speak out.

---

[12] As a stylistic convention, although I have provided the acronym for British Cycling in this quote, I will refer to the GB as British Cycling rather than BC.

Conversely, not all riders share the same consensus in their interpretation of the culture at British Cycling. Some cyclists have very different perspectives, illustrating the varying viewpoints and stances coterminous with a poststructural ontology. Some riders have demonstrated their support with one British team pursuit cyclist, Andy Tennant actively endorsing the high pressure, '…medal or nothing ethos of British Cycling' (Fotheringham, 2017). Additional support for Sutton was evident in Olympic Gold medallists Ed Clancy and Owain Doull, who owed a lot of their success in Rio 2016 to Sutton, with Doull stating that '…he was the architect of the Games' (McMichael, 2017). The Welsh cyclist Lewis Oliva has gone further to justify British Cycling's prioritising of Olympic medals in its 'brutal' training programme stating that '…it's a performance programme, not day care' (Brown, 2017). These riders have highlighted the tough, highly competitive world of elite sport in which the ends justify the means. Both Tennant's and Oliva's perspectives appear to subscribe to ideals of dominant masculinity, embodied by hardship, privation and self-sacrifice (Markula and Pringle, 2006). With these points in mind, I content that most of the more forceful counterclaims to Varnish *et al* are drawn along gendered lines and by lower profile (but still elite) male athletes in the system.

By way of contrast, explicit support for Sutton and British Cycling *per se* has been not been forthcoming from the higher profile male athletes in view of the many different investigations that have been carried out during the autumn and winter of 2016-2017. Indeed, the three-time winner of the Tour de France, Chris Froome has not publicly endorsed the culture within the sport, nor has he offered support for the beleaguered Team Ineos. On a larger scale, 16 Team Ineos riders have publicly supported their General Manager Sir David Brailsford, whilst 12 cyclists have stayed silent (including Froome) (Telegraph Sport, 2017). What this indicates is indeed open to interpretation.

Fire-starting, amplification spirals, and resistance

Jess Varnish's position outside the sport may have contributed to her continued vocal parrhesia in the press and other media forms. Her notoriety and frequent media exposure could be attributed to her increased cultural capital that facilitates a platform from which to air her censure of British Cycling. I contend that the fallout from the controversial internal review, the parliamentary inquiry into doping, the duty of care review within the sport's GB and the anticipated independent review all contributed to major changes in personnel and visible practices within British Cycling.

Leaked independent review documents raise interesting questions about the conduct of British Cycling. The *Draft Cycling Independent Review Action Plan* into the culture at the GB found that Varnish's dismissal from the Olympic programme was '…an act of retribution' against '…a trouble maker' (Pitt, 2017). Furthermore:

> In the situation involving Jess Varnish the panel did not find explanations convincing from coaching staff that she could go from being … potentially an Olympic medallist to not being good enough … within a week. An athlete would have to have been given a warning and also a reasonable period to improve before removal. Varnish was not given a warning or any period of time to improve. She was simply removed (Lawton, 2017).

The findings corroborate claims that the internal review conducted by British Cycling was 'sanitised' and the majority of the complaints against Sutton were not upheld due to the sports organisation reversing the findings of its own grievance officer (Lawton, 2017). The findings of the long-expected independent report could have further ramifications. These might include broader consequences than the Varnish and Sutton affair, as elite sport may have to re-examine its cultural practices and balance the pursuit of medals against athlete welfare. Nonetheless, with the General Election in the UK delaying the publication of the independent review (BBC, 2017b), it is questionable how potent it could be in eliciting real change; would any recommendations, steps and sanctions be more than a 'light

touch' or would the wheels of the medal factory continue to turn as they have done in the past?

Importance of the coaching context and ethical considerations of power

This Chapter has documented the tribulations of British Cycling, the Olympic Podium Programme and individual actors such as Jess Varnish and Shane Sutton, amongst others. As one of the UK's highest profile sports, it has achieved consummate success on the world stage, yet the methods and strategies used to achieve this unparalleled success have come at a price to the athletes and damaged the integrity of the sport. Both British Cycling and high-performance sport's powerful ethos of 'no compromise' in the pursuit of medals have meant exactly that: athlete welfare and autonomy has been sacrificed for success. This pervading culture has been internalised and normalised, creating a skewed perspective for many in the organisation. Subsequently, values and principles morph, creating a self-perpetuating culture of 'win at all costs' and 'marginal gains' as athletes travel through the system. Success breed success and this is compounded by specific, disciplinary techniques that render the athlete docile and more susceptible to unequal power relationships and the erosion of athlete autonomy (Denison, 2007). By adopting a 'no compromise' approach, the notion of athlete democracy, autonomy, and welfare is conveniently pushed aside. This certainly was the case until April 2016, at which point the Varnish and Sutton affair projected athlete welfare and accepted practices within elite sport into the public arena to be subjected to debate and scrutiny.

By interrogating current practices and being aware of the importance of power dynamics, interpersonal relationships and inter-contextuality, the wider social context and macro-forces needs to be considered. This work could lead to advances in coach development, ethics of coaching, reflection of own practice, and coaching philosophy development. By becoming more reflective and interrogative of their coaching practices, coaches could adopt more inclusive strategies to go

beyond the medal production line and adopt '…broader spheres of inquiry…with multiple iterations of experiencing, communicating, instructing, teaching, and learning' (Bush et al., 2013:99). Whether this is a quixotic perspective on the potential for coaching to break out of its ontological confines as a means to solely improve the sporting performance of athletes, or not, remains to be seen.

Other authors are also keen to expand the intellectual horizons of sport coaching and have begun to recognise the implicit workings of power and its relationship with the production of dominant coaching practices and discourse. For example, Denison (2007; 2010) and Mills and Denison (2013; 2018) are noted for their application of Foucault's (1977) theory of disciplinary power to interpreting endurance running coaches' practices and in questioning how coaches frame and solve coaching dilemmas.

From the events outlined in this Chapter, British Cycling has an opportunity to interrogate its accepted cultural and coaching practices in order to salvage its reputation and to regain the public trust. By subjecting itself to scrutiny and inviting academic research from a number of disciplines, the broader academic community could contribute to a new relationship between British Cycling, funding bodies, administrators, officials, the general public, coaches, athletes, ex-athletes and other interested stakeholders.

CHAPTER III - MARKS IN THE SAND AND STYLISTIC APPROACHES

In the pages that follow I would like to offer some clarity on where I feel my thesis fits and to emphasise my main points of departure from existing sports coaching literature. I consider this to be a natural progression from the preceding introductory Chapters and provides a bridge towards my conceptual framework in Chapter IV. Furthermore, I believe that a justification for the stylistic approaches chosen, conventional or otherwise, is warranted. It is here where I consider writing and research to be a political endeavour and to be mindful of the ramifications of aligning to postmodern and poststructural sensibilities and approaches.

Points of departure for sports coaching research

I started Chapter I with a discussion about the complex nature of sport which led into an exposition of the slippery, provoking concepts of power. As the discussion moved towards the interrelationship between sport, power, and the coach-athlete relationship(s), I found that I wanted to say many things all at once. Perhaps now I can return to these unfinished themes and continue my aim to problematise previous assumptions, in this case to give voice to my disquiet about sports coaching research. In doing so, I offer alternative ways of thinking and accomplishing research in my chosen field.

So how do I account for my disquiet? In Chapter I, I suggested that despite a growing body of research, the field of sports coaching research is sometimes described as lacking potency in its progress and exercise (Lyle and Cushion, 2017). I find myself in agreement with Andrews (2008) who is critical of a field that values bio-scientific discourse over qualitative approaches. This is exemplified by the overriding influence of sport psychology as a dominating parent discipline to sports coaching (Cushion et al., 2006; Jones, 2005, cited in Bush et al., 2013). Additionally, given that psychology and physiology are still cited as the dominant disciplines within most sport science university departments and that research in these fields

is still judged in accordance to '…individualised outcome-based assessment systems for research productivity', the audit culture favours quantitative studies on performance enhancement (Smith and McGannon, 2015:196). Likewise, the influence of North American approaches to sports science programmes and research can be seen in the relative lack of pedagogy or, indeed, sociology. The tenacious embrace of postpositivistic humanist sports psychology has dominated coaching science since the 1980s (Bush et al., 2013). This has led to a proliferation of studies focusing on coaching mechanisms such as cognition, decision making, behaviours, and traits that have dictated the discourse (Abrahams and Collins, 2011; Jowett, 2003; 2017; Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007; Kidman, 2005; Lyle, 2002) that I contend have negated other ways of knowing and quieted alternative epistemologies. This insistence on reducing the complexities of coaching practice to simplistic models of behaviours or processes (Kidman and Hanrahan, 2011) are reductionist and redundant and plays into the notion that there is a one size fits all approach to sports coaching that is both limiting and limited in its scope.

I seek to address this shortcoming by challenging the somewhat one-dimensional approach, developing a subtler, complex, multi-layered investigation of the coach-athlete relationship(s), emphasising operations of social power as a central theme. In doing so, I seek to develop a broader conceptual base for researchers and practitioners alike. More specifically, I consider Rylander's (2015) criticism that despite much research into coaches' influence in terms of their effects on athletes, little work has been done on investigating coaches' power in terms of what enables them to influence athletes in the first place. Thus, the focus of the literature emphasises coaching behaviour that impacts on athletes' motivation, satisfaction and other psycho-social outcomes (Horne, 2008) and much less attention is paid to unravelling the invisible operations of power.

In order to further unpack some of the issues inherent to sports coaching research and practice, I seek to problematise its reliance on humanist sports psychology that present coaching as idealistic representations, decontextualised linear models, or restricted coach-athlete dyads. I offer that these readings bear little relation to the complex social interplay between multiple actors operating on numerous intersecting levels where structure, agency, role, interaction, and learning amongst others are both subject to and constituted by relations of power within a wider socio-cultural context. I suggest that the lamentable treatment of power in the sports coaching literature is itself a symptom of the wider failure of sport as a socio-cultural phenomenon to give due consideration to the operations and nuances of power.

At this point it might be useful to compare and contrast the various approaches of sociology and psychology of sport, which I hope will elucidate my position. Although they may be:

> ...conceptualised differently within and across disciplines, many researchers in both disciplines accept that our personal lives are socially, culturally, and politically influenced (Smith and McGannon, 2015:195).

Moreover, though they may seem to represent two separate disciplines, there is considerable overlap and both approaches may adopt qualitative and quantitative concepts and methods. Alternatively, though they may share a common goal, some branches of the disciplines are quite distinct in terms of their different conceptions, use of vocabulary, application of methods, and beliefs about ontology and epistemology. Whereas text books on sport psychology are often framed as studying individual behaviour in terms of traits and practices that occur within individuals (Gill, 2000), sport:

> ...sociologists study actions and relationships in terms of the social conditions and cultural contexts in which people live their lives (Coakley and Pike, 2014:12).

Consequently, the way that the two disciplines are valued is perhaps predicated on the way that they subscribe to the ideals of humanist thought. According to Houlihan and Malcom (2015), the importance of the individual and the strength of their agency is overplayed to the detriment of the operation of social forces and cultural influences. This serves to elevate the value of psychology, whilst to some, the role of sociology is diminished. This becomes more potent especially in the light that much research into sport psychology has been conducted in accordance to the scientific method, with an emphasis on experimental approaches (Gill, 2000; Houlihan, 2008).

In addition, I suggest that further distinctions in lie in the various approaches these two fields of study may take. Psychologists usually apply their knowledge to exploring and expanding upon specific problems of particular individuals. Conversely, sociologists often focus on shared experiences and the social issues that affect entire groupings of people (Coakley and Pike, 2014). These different approaches can have serious ramifications for the creation, perfusion and acceptance of new knowledges, either perpetuating particular, accepted ways of knowing, or re-framing, disrupting or rupturing the dominant discourse (Foucault, 1970). Consequently, this position is hard to put in practice, so sports coaching seems not to have challenged the powerful monolithic sport structures and the highly revered culture of high-performance sport. This may, in part, explain the previously mentioned proliferation and overreliance of psychological models of behaviour, instigating my point of departure from the existing literature on coach-athlete relationship(s). Subsequently, my disillusionment with this discourse has projected me towards a critical sociological approach where power, language, habitus, standpoint, agency, and structure act in concert with micro-politics and wider social and political forces to produce a postmodern and poststructural analysis of the coach-athlete relationship(s) that has been ignored or simplified by psychologically-ordained coaching science.

In terms of this endeavour, what follows is an account of the problems that surround an overreliance on these psychological models, taking my point of departure from Jowett and colleagues who have been prolific in this area. Since the start of the twenty-first century, Jowett and colleagues have explored the coach-athlete relationship(s) in sport by focusing on interconnected beliefs, perceptions, and behaviours of actors predominated by the constructs of the 3+1 Cs (closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation) (Jowett, 2005; 2007; 2017; Jowett and Cockerill, 2002; 2003; Jowett and Chaundy, 2004; Jowett and Clark-Carter, 2006; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett and Shanmugam, 2016; Lorimer and Jowett, 2009). From this perspective, the coach-athlete relationship(s) is widely defined '…as a situation in which a coach and athlete's cognitions, feelings and behaviours are mutually and casually interrelated' (Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007:4). In this way, individual character and personality traits, together with affective behavioural elements are combined with each actor's thoughts to produce a closed study of the relationship in question. Conversely, Jowett and colleagues recognise the importance and potency of this topic, declaring that:

> …the athlete-coach relationship is fundamental in the process of coaching because its nature is likely to determine the athlete's satisfaction, self-esteem and performance accomplishments (Jowett and Cockerill, 2003:314).

Yet, it is largely as a result of this failure to consider the contextual interpersonal nature of the coach-athlete relationship(s) that for me, weakens the potency and application of these psychological models. Moreover, the vocabulary that is used is significant as it effectively shackles the authors to a restricted and restricting way of thinking. This is exemplified by the following:

> This paper argues that coaches and athletes are *locked into* a two-person (*dyadic*) relationship and its quality can offer a measure of coaching and its effectiveness (Jowett, 2017:154 emphasis added).

By repeatedly describing the coach-athlete relationship(s) as a dyad, purely between the protagonists and locked in*,* over-emphasises its closed-off, isolated,

and self-contained nature. It is, therefore, an artificial, behavioural construct, largely represented as a sterile encounter. Ironically, Jowett actually defines coach-athlete relationship(s) '…as a social situation' which is '…continuously shaped by interpersonal thoughts, feelings and behaviours of the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2017:154). Yet the social context and temporal nature of relationships in flux is ignored and these models fail to consider the wider relationships and networks of power that surround the protagonists.

By way of contrast, when the wider social world is acknowledged (Jowett and Frost, 2007; Jowett and Timson-Katchis, 2005; Olympiou et al., 2008), there are limitations and oversimplifications which affect the cogency of such studies. First, when issues of race intersect with the coach-athlete relationship(s), despite an understanding of race as a social construct, Jowett and Frost (2007) present the issue as unproblematic. Furthermore, though this is a welcome attempt at adopting a more qualitative angle, the paper is deeply wedded to postpositivistic sensibilities, an uncritical interview methodology, and returns to the same themes of closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation. Second, representing the relationship as a triad (involving parents, coach, and athlete) hardly enlarges the social sphere (Jowett and Timson-Katchis, 2005). Finally, such studies rely on antecedents correlated with motivational climate (Olympiou et al., 2008). The paper by Olympiou et al. (2008) was based on a systematic application of questionnaires designed to produce set responses which were quantitatively analysed and reduced to selective covariates of behaviour. My perception is that it did not take a truly interpersonal approach (being located as behaviours within individuals) in ways that lacked a critical angle or communicated enough depth to be thoroughly convincing.

Although many papers on the coach-athlete relationship(s) have been authored by Jowett and colleagues, their emphasis has been predominantly on the quantitative measurement of relationships to identify problem areas (Davis and Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2007; 2009; Jowett and Clark-Carter, 2006; Jowett and Cockerill, 2002; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004; Rhind and Jowett, 2010). I adopt the position that when statistical or numerical descriptions of human behaviour, interaction, influences, or processes dominate modes of inquiry, the humanity can be stripped away. To elaborate, when attempts to provide neat categorisations of coding and analysis or relentless obsession with data reduction and unimaginative modes of presentation predominate, we often lose the richness, thick description and fleshiness that imbues quality qualitative research (Finlay, 2006; Schostak, 2006; St. Pierre, 2011). Equally, when interviews have been included as a method of data generation (Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Meek, 2000), I argue that although mixed methods may have been used, it has not resulted in a mixed methodology. They may have used the tools of mixed methods, but are epistemologically wedded to postpositivist approaches that consider knowledge to be liberated from consciousness and based upon a sole outward reality that can be explained through cause and effect (Nelson et al., 2014a). I argue that such an approach is limited and limiting in its attempt to seek generalisations, reductive reasoning, deterministic accounts, and universality in the complexities and nuances of coach-athlete relationship(s). In addition, power as a concept is hardly mentioned and, even when it is, power is presented as possessive, never embodied or relational (Lorimer and Jowett, 2009; Wachsmuth et al., 2018).

By way of contrast, some studies focusing on the coaching process or coach-athlete relationship(s) have given more emphasis to the processes of power, by applying a power framework based on the seminal study by French and Raven (1959). Whilst this has been a useful starting point for several theoretical works (Cassidy et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2004; Potrac and Jones, 2011) most empirical studies compress and scale down key concepts (Cranmer and Goodboy, 2015; Turman, 2006). Nevertheless, some studies such as Groom et al. (2012), Potrac et al. (2002) and

Rylander (2015) have taken more rigorous methodological and evaluative approaches that have attempted to further our understanding of the complex nature of power relations inherent in coaching. Based on five power bases (reward, referent, expert, legitimate and coercive power), I consider that the French and Raven (1959) framework appears persuasive and offers a sophisticated reading of how power may be operationalised between actors.

Notwithstanding its potential application, there are a number of limitations of the original paper. First, Rylander (2015) points to its power framework being more psychological in nature, which is as odds to with its title emphasising *The basis of social power*. Additionally, this discord is emphasised by an early section entitled 'psychological change' focusing on mental attributes and the capacity for influence and modification of behaviours. Second, the framework is constructed from the perspective of '…the person upon who the power is exerted' and not from the power-dominant agent (French and Raven, 1959:150). In the papers by Turman (2006) and Cranmer and Goodboy (2015), it is the athletes' impression of the coach that influences their assumed power base and attributes too much emphasis to the implicit dialectic between these two perspectives. I argue that these are actually investigations into what determines the reactions of the recipient of the behaviour that is the focus.

Further criticisms of the use of the French and Raven (1959) framework is that numerous studies no not do justice to the complexities and sophistication of the original paper. I contend that many of the subtler points are omitted; for example, there is little in the way of a discussion of social influence verses control or strength of power and dependence. In addition, I am sceptical of methodologies that rely specifically on postpositive questionnaires and subjected to quantitative analysis that do not invite deeper readings of this multi-layered interdependent phenomenon (Turman, 2006). Finally, most papers (with the exception of Groom et al., 2012, Potrac et al., 2002 or Cassidy et al., 2009) ignore the more recent developments of the original French and Raven (1959) framework, dating them.

For example studies such as Raven (1992; 1993; 2001; 2008a; 2008b) and Raven et al. (1998) evolved the original ideas and take a more refined view of the more detailed ways that the five original power bases could be conceptualised. It would be interesting to see future work consider these issues from a psycho-sociological perspective that is mindful of these anxieties.

Given the limitations of these approaches, it is worth further investigating how previous conceptions of power have been treated in the sports coaching literature from a sociological perspective. Owing to the many different ways of conceiving and presenting the workings of power (Lyle and Cushion, 2017), I offer that empirical work is nascent and variable. On one level, power is presented as a binary dynamic, or zero-sum game as illustrated in earlier work by Jones et al. (2005) and D'Arripe-Longueville (1998). Whilst these are welcome attempts to problematise the coach-athlete relationship, power is presented as a finite resource and always located within the realm of the coach. Second, other studies (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Potrac and Jones, 2009) have taken a classic Webarian or Machiavellian approach to power, which is focused on manoeuvring, strategy or control. These perspectives consider power to have more fluid properties, linked to schemes and tactics and presented by notions of a disputed hegemony. Though providing valuable insights, I contend that power in this vein is still infused by possessive notions of 'power over' and manipulation and thus limited in its application.

Alternatively, sports scholars like Denison (2007; 2011), Denison and Mills (2014), Denison et al. (2015), Gearity and Metzger (2017), Gearity and Mills (2012) and Mills and Denison (2013; 2018) have taken a Foucauldian approach to produce a more sophisticated and subtler interpretation of power. I offer that by presenting power as diffuse, relational and decentred makes it a compelling conception with multiple applications. Subsequently, in their use of Foucault's disciplinary techniques and technologies of the self, these authors have explored how coaches have created not only situational contexts and training practices that produce docile athlete bodies, but contribute to the creation of athlete identities and

dominant discourse. Power, in this way is perceived as an essential operational element within the social context and together with the power-knowledge nexus contributes to the circulation and recreation of discourses such as compliance and conformity (Cushion, 2018). Whilst I consider that the appropriation of Foucauldian thinking is an exciting direction, present studies to date have not included consideration of the hidden institutional, economic, political or cultural intersections of power as it relates to the coach-athlete relationship(s).

Similarly, other sociological thinkers have been appropriated by the sports coaching literature in an attempt to accommodate differing theorisations of power. Despite several studies (Cushion, 2011b; Cushion and Jones, 2014; Taylor and Garratt, 2010b; Townsend and Cushion, 2017) focusing on Bourdieusian analyses of sports coaching or coach education, there is a scarcity of research that explores the coach-athlete relationship from a power perspective (Cassidy et al., 2009). Specifically, Cushion and Jones's (2006) paper is powerfully suggestive of how symbolic violence systematically recreates a dictatorial coaching regime that is intimately connected with social capital, and thus dimensions of power. A subsequent paper by Cushion and Jones (2014) continues these themes whereby the circulation of capital underpins the context, imbuing coaches with legitimate power and strengthening coaching norms and behaviours. Dominant ideologies of respecting authority or winning reinforce accepted discourse about coaches access to power, transforming athletes into objects with little recourse to their own autonomy.

By way of contrast, work by Purdy and colleagues (Purdy et al., 2008; 2009; Purdy and Jones, 2011) have highlighted ways in which athletes have access to subversion and resistance tactics when faced with over authoritative coaches or poor coaching practices. Rather than passively accepting controlling behaviours or complying with the demands of certain coaches, the high-level rowers featured employed withdrawal of best effort, open challenges, derision, scorn and routine complains to administrators. By utilising Giddens's (1984) theorisation of power as fluid,

interdependent and characterised the capacity of individuals to modify their social worlds, Purdy et al. (2008) explored the extent to which subordinate individuals or groups were able to challenge the balance of power. This dialectic of control manifests itself as covert or open rebellion from the rowers leading to an irrevocable breakdown of the coach-athlete relationship(s). Furthermore, it exemplifies Giddens's (1984) conception that power is not only asymmetrical, but that its operation relies on authority and dependence. When social capital is diminished, relationships are contested and resisted, leading to a redistribution of the balance and operation of power.

Notwithstanding these interesting forays into perceived athlete power, I suggest that work by Purdy and colleagues is essentially micro-political in nature, and focuses on the behaviours and interactions of the active parties, to the detriment of more insightful wider macro-social forces. Opportunities for further cultural commentary are lost. Similarly, though work by Potrac and Jones (2009), Potrac et al. (2002) Potrac et al. (2012) and Thompson et al. (2015) has emphasised the value of the micropolitical coach in action, the broader connotations and manifestations of power relationships are omitted. In my thesis I contend that power runs much deeper, and that is intimately concerned with the ways in which it produces reality and contributes to the creation of knowledges, discourse or ways of knowing (Foucault, 1978; 1980). Specifically, I am interested in how the micro and macro worlds intersect; expanding upon the cultural, political, economic and institutional workings of power that, in turn, influence the coach-athlete relationship.

A question of style (elegance or pretention?)

Prior to exploring a potential poststructural and postmodern framework, I feel that the next section on style acts to link together my points of departure to the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings that underscore my research. I believe that this is warranted, for not only am I adopting elements of poststructural and postmodernist approaches as a paradigm and methodology, but also more specifically, locating them as a personal, political, and writing endeavour. It is not enough, therefore, to solely present these approaches as a research end; it is a position that I need to be constantly mindful of in order to write differently and purposely, where style, word choice, and voice interact to produce meaning (however that is constructed). In doing so, I acknowledge that my various roles (qualitative researcher, Higher Education [HE] educator, and PhD candidate, amongst others) together with my relationship with my research subject, are imbricated in my stylistic approach to writing. Thus, the way that I engage with, think, and formulate my writing, including textual representations, novel ways of presenting data, and literary devices that I adopt, has ramifications for postmodern and poststructural considerations with authority and legitimacy of the text (St. Pierre, 2011).

These issues are important for myself and for Richardson (1994; 1997; 2000a) who exhorts us not to think of writing as simply a transcribing of a particular reality, for it is more complex than that. Subsequently, this can inform a three-way discovery process of the subject in question, perhaps the problem itself and in discovery of the self. For me, reading Pelais's chapter *Writing into Position* (2011) was a pivotal moment; it was here that I became much more aware of the political and procedural dimensions of writing and how these intersect with aspects of power. In turn, this sparked off my understanding of writing to be a performative, cerebral, and creative process that becomes an extension of self and reaches out from

across the page. Thus:

> Writing is a realisation and a record, is a performative act, a material manifestation of a writer's labour and ideology, an enunciation that carries weight in the social world (Pelais, 2011:665).

As such, writing oneself into position is central to a postmodern sensibility, where the importance of the self in scholarly writing as a way of knowing is considered and problematised (Pelias, 2011; Richardson, 1991; 2000a; St. Pierre, 2011). In turning to such writers, writing is framed as not only a method of communication or an intellectual endeavour, but as a potent processual political process: 'I consider writing as a *method of inquiry*, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic' (Richardson, 2000a:923 emphasis original). Other writers concur, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) emphasise the importance of the writing process not only as a way to present findings, but in trialling new analyses, novel ideas or diverse ways of presenting. In this way, it is inseparable from the research process. Moreover:

> Writing should be treated as an intrinsic part of the methodology of research – and not as a final 'postscript' added on. We find out what we want to say by writing, which becomes a tool for thinking (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:301).

Reading and thinking about writing in this way was novel for me and it encouraged me to put my own writing practices under the spotlight. As writing is such a deeply personal, emotive and revealing practice, reflecting one's perspectives and cognitive processes, I will be including the use of the first person, personal pronouns, and notions of voice and presence. Equally, I will attempt to be cognisant of the postmodern notion of polyvocality together with an appreciation that research is never truly concluded, for there is always an element of incompleteness which stands in conflict to the idea of finishing a thesis. Finally, the relationship between language and power will be considered together with the practical and political use of data.

De-privatising the self: who's line is it anyway?

The first stylistic approach that may be already evident to the reader is my use of the first person. Traditional positivistic sciences writing has viewed the researcher with suspicion and has attempted to remove all traces of individuality, policies and politics from the report, raising concerns about '…how standard objectifying practices of social science unnecessarily limit us and social science' (Richardson, 2000a:924). Being aware of the assumptions and conventions of some science and political writing can draw attention to potential limitations and criticisms that impact on the quality of such writing. Thus, I read that much quantitative or postpositivistic writing is preoccupied with notions of objectivism and a propensity of writers to distance themselves from the reader (Hertz, 1997; Richardson, 1991; 2000a; St. Pierre, 2011). These same authors also suggest that this sensibility has also permeated some aspects of qualitative research, imbuing personal pronouns with distrust and so reject them. These burning embers of postpositivism smoulder on in qualitative and mixed method work provoking a rejoinder from those who repudiate such limitations:

> …it ignores the role of writing as a dynamic creative process; it undermines the confidence of beginning qualitative researchers because their experiences of research is inconstant with the writing model; and it contributes to the flotilla of qualitative writing that is not interesting to read because adherence to the model *requires writers to silence their own voices and view themselves as contaminants* (Richardson, 2000a:924-925 emphasis added).

Running counter to this somewhat neutered approach, I aim to take a more creative, critical qualitative approach where I argue that issues of language and positionality are key. Writing in the first person not only permits me to publicly own my voice, but acknowledges the uniqueness of me in the research process itself. Therefore, one of the benefits of being aligned to a postmodern sensibility is that the centrality of myself as the author is not only acknowledged, but embraced as a significant aspect of my research agenda. In this vein, I was delighted to read Germano (2014) who supports the identification of the researcher who speaks

directly to the reader. He argues that by limiting the passive voice and emphasising the personal, writers who view themselves as co-creators of knowledges, interpretations, and readings can result in a more textured, richer, and less absolute body of work than those who take a more rigid and structured approach. I consider that this exciting way of doing allows for multiple, conflicting, contradictory, radical, salacious, and everyday perspectives, fully wedded to the postmodern notion of fractured realities and shifting, manifold, and incomplete truths (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). In doing so, my standpoints, experiences, understanding of my particular reality, including high-level athletics, and place in the world contributes towards the construction and nature of my research endeavour. Thus, I adopt the position of ourselves as active, '…situated speakers, subjectivities engaged in knowing/telling about the world as [we] perceive it' (Richardson, 2000a:928).

Yet this is the sanitised version; in reality, writing in this vein has been challenging and fraught with difficulty and doubt. In reflecting on this process whilst editing this section, some of the supervisory comments on my manuscript have queried my lapses into objectifying practices and scientific scientism. Comments such as 'Write yourself into the text. Have a conversation with yourself, not an information exchange' and 'Just be careful that the defence of other methods are not premised on the fact that it is not positivism' weigh on me. I am further reminded of email exchanges with my Director of Studies[13] (DoS) who patiently exhorts me to:

> Most importantly, remember to be tentative, suggestive and person centred in your writing and when reading it back to yourself challenge your own use of the written word … give more of yourself and be brave.

---

[13] To clarify to the reader, in the last year of my PhD, I had a change of DoS resulting in an alteration to my supervisory team. Throughout my research, Dr William G Taylor has taken on the role of DoS until his change of employment at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) whereupon Dr Laura Gale took over. Now an honorary Research Fellow at Leeds Becket University, Dr Taylor remains as my External Advisor and is responsible for overseeing the technical direction, including style and content throughout. As Dr Gale has provided an administrative function, but has not been involved in leading my research, any mention of DoS refers entirely to Dr Taylor.

Dampening down those residual embers of postpositivist practice is a continual process and I have to look over my own shoulder at what I write to free myself from the old ways of doing, lest I disappoint myself (and annoy my readers).

Multiple voices: exploding the myth of the singular author

Similarly, consideration of writing in the first person concerns issues of 'voice', which is in itself a hazy and highly ambiguous term and has been interpreted differently by many researchers (Burnett, 2016; Elbow, 1994; Lather, 2009). Specifically, I turn to this description from Hertz:

> 'Voice is a struggle to figure out how we represent the author's self while simultaneously writing the respondent's accounts and representing their selves. Voice has multiple dimensions. First, there is the voice of the author. Second, there is the presentation of the voices of ones' respondents within the text. A third dimension appears when the self is the subject of the inquiry (1997:xi-xii).

Questioning researcher privilege and accommodating multiple meanings or readings of data helps reify postmodernism's deep scepticism of reality and knowledge, shattering limited and limiting understandings of truth and objectivity further.

Furthermore, we write so others can read, for writing is rarely - if ever - an individual act. Some authors emphasise the sociality of writing (Bazerman, 2009; 2012; Edmondson, 2007; Heap 1989) and draw attention to the interrelations between selfhood, power and writing (Faubion, 2000; O'Farrell, 2005). Bazerman (2009) emphasises how writing not only influences the production of an identity, of constructing a position or developing an argument, but in terms of writing as social action, it frames social understanding, politicises cultural practices and can be used to disrupt and challenge accepted ways of knowing. Burnett (2016:463) recognises this aspect, acknowledging 'The centrality of the researcher's ideological stance and "voice" constitutes the power of agency of qualitative research'. I believe that researchers have an obligation to recognise and value their position, influence, and choices on the development of an academic study, to own their standpoint and to

acknowledge their agency. These concerns with language, vocabulary, and style are interwoven themes that link into a postmodern and poststructural sensibility that will be systematically returned to throughout this thesis.

Consideration of reflexivity and multiple identities

Subsequently, my contemplation of author voice leads me to consider the poststructural notion of 'incompleteness' (Pelais, 2011). For postmodernists, there is no true or inner essence of self from which to base voice on as we are a partial and partisan mix of multiple, mixing, and competing selves (Lawrence, 2018; Smith and Sparkes, 2008). Put differently, to acknowledge the self as a composite of multiple overlapping and competing identities is essential if one is to adopt postmodern sensibilities. Also connected to these notions, is the continuous appreciation and use of reflexivity in research. This is important for:

> Reflexivity forces us to come to terms …. with ourselves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting (Lincoln et al., 2011:124).

More compelling for me is Reinharz (1997:3) who maintains that we not only '…*bring* the self into the field … [we also] *create* the self in the field' (emphasis original). Thus, the act of doing research is transformative in itself.

This deliberate construction of the multiple researcher self can be exemplified from two passages from my Researcher Fieldnote Journal.[14] Here, I reflect on the performativity of the active interview (Brinkman and Kvale, 2015; Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Holstein and Gubrium, 2003) when interviewing Lauren, an

---

[14] As a stylistic convention, I will be taking quotes from my Reflexive Journals, Researcher Fieldnote Journal, supervisory meeting notes, and various logs to illustrate my thought processes and to develop a reflexive sensitivity in an attempt to take into account postmodern representational issues (Koro-Ljungberg, 2013; Kuecker, 2018).

international field event athlete:

> Doing an interview is not a simplistic activity that just involves listening to an answer from a question posed, for it is complicated by which position both participants are inhabiting at the time. Which role or aspect of themselves are they referring to? Is there a conflict between the roles/standpoints they are personifying and/or projecting which is then (mis)interpreted by the interviewer and vice versa? They are creating you in their mind just as much as you are creating them in yours (June, 2018).

This performativity has been explored by Butler (1993) who suggests that identity is an effect formed through repetition rather than from a central immutable core of oneself. Furthermore, multiple notions of identity can be created with the employment of certain words and their delivery in the context of the interview. I offer that the performativity of the interview contributes towards the way in which we are perceived, which in turn influences the construction of meaning.

Similarly, concerns with creating personas link in with Goffman's (1959) presentation of the self and other dramaturgical strategies to facilitate social exchange. I am reminded of a challenging interview with Dean, an Athlete Performance Manager who became so taciturn and withdrawn it became almost impossible to entice him:

> After chatting to Dean informally some hours earlier I had anticipated a smooth run and was shocked to find a stilted conversation in which he seemed to clam up. Was this the result of being audio-recorded? Or was it me and I unsettled him? He seemed reluctant to answer any questions and it threw me completely. I realised that if I wanted to positively influence the outcome of the interview I needed to spend time re-building our rapport. So I completely altered the style of questioning, went totally off script and tried to salvage it … (February, 2018).

This experience really highlighted for me how hard an interviewer needs to work in order to facilitate a positive exchange. In doing so, I drew upon my 20 years of lecturing experiences in which interpersonal skills are central to developing learners and creating confidence in others. Although I am a relatively inexperienced and naïve PhD student, if I had been younger and without professional skills, I may not have handled the situation as adroitly (if indeed I did).

Roving identities and notions of incompleteness

The notion of multiple selves is attractive, however, not all voices are represented equally when we write. This is the problematic notion of 'presence', for how can we argue that writing is a genuine and faithful representation of the writer when there are so many competing voices? For writing:

> …can never fully express or articulate a whole person. A person is usually too complex and has too many facets, parts, voices, identities (Elbow, 1994:12).

Here, Elbow mirrors my position (and discomfort) on the incompleteness of doing qualitative research; we can never say everything about anything and everything we say carries ideological weight. By acknowledging the slippery notion of language (Schostak, 2006) and being aware of the discord between meaning and subject (signifier and signified) '…noting linguistic limitations draws attention to the elusive and inexpressible that haunts all qualitative inquiry' (Pelias, 2011:664). Schostak (2006) also meditates on the politics of what we leave out being meaningful. These thematic concerns are expressed in postmodern approaches to research as a truly:

> …holistic account is betrayed by the slippage born from the partiality of language – of what can be said precisely because of what is said, and of the impossible difference within what is said, what is intended, what is signified, what is repressed, what is taken and what remains (Britzman, 1995:230).

In this vein, I present myself as a composite mix of multifarious, competing selves, with incomplete positional standpoints drawn from manifold experiences fleshed out with socially constituted knowledges. This is in keeping with a postmodernist perspective where myself as an author (or interviewee) adopts '…inconsistent positions and moving identities as well as the text's uncertainty, fragmentation, multivalence and lack of closure' (Rail, 1998:xiii). Thus, the postmodern notion of polyvocality or multiple voices possessed by a single subject is analogous to thoughts of multiple, disjointed realities and fractured, partial knowledges. In creating a tangible and complex mix of multiple identities, I borrow from Russel Y Rodriguez (2002) and draw from my Reflexive Journal:

> I am a mix of insider and outsider identities in which I embody white, middle class, heterosexual privilege, but possess female 'otherness'. I am the newcomer in postgraduate research, but the experienced practitioner in education. A quantitative history supplanted by qualitative sensibilities (March, 2019).

Thus, I do not claim to be an all knowing omnipresent narrator who possesses objective, atemporal knowledge, but instead I take:

> ...a postmodernist position [that] does allow us to know "something" without claiming to know everything. Having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing (Richardson, 2000a:928).

Daring to be different: the ironies of individuality or rebelling against structure

A further stylistic convention that (I hope) characterises my work is that of experimentation and unconventionality. This is illustrated by an excerpt in my reflexive writing:

> I will attempt to play with structure, sequencing and flow in order to do justice to the paradigm[s] that I have aligned myself with, particularly postmodernism. Hopefully, this will be evident in my choice of chapter and subheadings, use of metaphors and word play to subvert assumed truisms, expressions and literary devices and to juxtapose ideas, highlighting contradictions (May, 2019).

To this end, I will not be including a formal review of literature, but continually weaving in key examples from the literature throughout in order to remain close to the body of work that I hope to add to. This could be seen as contentious, as deliberately provoking, however, other than treating it as another example of the lingering and limiting influence of postpositivism on postdoctoral representations of research, it is not always necessary (Wolcott, 2001). In this case, my introduction attempts to demonstrate the cogency of undertaking a sociologically inspired PhD on the manifestations and operations of power in high-performance sport and the cycling vignette demonstrates the legitimacy and application to the real world. Throughout, I aim to provide a close reading of available literature (and the extended argument of the inadequacy of existing literature) which will be referred to in an iterative process that follows these pages.

Tied to the notion of experimentation is the importance of the writing process itself. As mentioned at the start of this section on style, writing is considered as part of the research process, but also, more importantly, as a method of research (Richardson, 2000a; Wolcott, 2001). This is having important implications for my thinking processes and the way that I approach my research; thus:

> Writers come to realise what they believe in the process of writing, in the act of finding the language that crystallises their thoughts and sentiments. It is a process of "writing into" rather than "writing up" a subject. When writing up a subject, writers know what they wish to say before the composition process begins. When writing into a subject, writers discover what they know through the writing (Pelias, 2011:660).

My thoughts coincide with Pelais's own position on this issue and I believe that writing allows me to progress my own thinking much more than reading alone. The topic appears several times in my Reflexive Journal, as it is pivotal, I suggest, to my research process. Thus:

> I have learnt that writing is an active, creative and thinking process where I have experienced moments of insights that help me to move the PhD process forwards. Conversely, I do not find this activity easy; each sentence is hard fought, agonising over the implications of word choice, grammar and structure (June, 2019).

Writing as a craft and a medium for knowledge creation

Writing from a poststructuralist position, where every word is important, has ramifications for (mis)interpretation and (mis)understanding, word play or style becomes an extension of a writer's identity and a projection of self. They are more than simply words on a page, no matter how cleverly marshalled and crafted they may be. It is my intention to acknowledge the power of words where '...all utterances are ideologically laden' (Pelais, 2011:264). This extends to being mindful of the terminology used, how use of language honours some at the cost to others, how a word's derivation contains negative or politically laden connotations, and how the word in question excludes or obscures just as much as it enlightens (Pelias, 2011; Spence, 1982). Thus, language is all-important as it does not simply reflect reality, rather it directly informs the realities constructed, feeding in to the type of

knowledges created (Frost and Elichaoff, 2014). Language and perceptions combine with individual realities and knowledge in a shifting power relation that influences thinking and discourse (Foucault, 1970). Equally, during the reading and writing of this thesis, I have become more sympathetic to Derrida's view that all language is metaphoric (1967). In fact, consideration of '…writing shows how language as a discursive system is never innocent, never without bias' (Pelias, 2011:664).

Decisions about data

Latour (2005) suggests that data can be found everywhere and so I must give thought on how to approach, view and use it in my research. I join with Sermijn et al. (2008) and others in recognising the monstrous nature of data in terms of its messiness, its incompleteness, its contradictions and missing pieces, its difficulties, and the struggle to bring it to the page (Krane, 2016; Giardina, 2016; Lather and St. Pierre, 2013; Schostak, 2006). By viewing data as something that '…may not need to be collected, but may be lived, sensed and done' (Benozzo et al., 2013:309) frame it more organically. Put differently, it is not something to be unearthed, found, or mined, but is co-constructed, temporal, and subject to different readings through dissimilar lenses (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Correspondingly, Benozzo et al. (2013:309) invites us to consider data as:

> …a wave, a flow, as liquid: ever changing, inconsistent, unreliable, noninterpretable; as a dark forest. Data is already there and here, only partially accessible.

This abstract way of framing and interpreting data leads me to question my role in the creation and consumption of data in my research endeavour. If, as Giardina (2016) suggests, data cannot be separated from me, the researcher, as I am engaged in complex meaning making, interpretation, and understanding of empirical material, then I must treat this interrelation critically from an ontological perspective. As Koro-Ljungberg (2013:4) maintains, '…data is not necessarily ontologically linked to the real'. I interpret this to mean that data can be subjected to possible readings or versions of a fragmented, multiple reality with different 'truths' and, therefore, not concrete, absolute, or objective.

Another reading of this position is that we should be concerned over the politics of '…controlled data manufacture especially manufacture that takes place under surveillance' (Koro-Ljungberg (2013:1). This position is made clearer when viewed in relation to Baudrillard's (2000) concerns with data being seen simply as an object or reflection of the real. For him, data is[15] never 'Real', but a duplicate of 'Real' that always evades itself. As a reflection of my poststructural and postmodern position that causes disruption between existence, knowledge, and reality, I will not be using, for example, triangulation methods, subjectivity statements or inter-researcher reliability procedures. I contend that this best allows me to pursue different ways of knowing, to incorporate polyvocality (of myself and research participants) and to better reflect the poststructural and postmodern approach chosen (Giardina, 2016; St. Pierre, 2011).

Additionally, consideration of what actually constitutes data and the different ways that it is used has ramifications to the credibility, clarity, and resonance of qualitative research (Finlay, 2006). Thus, the way that the data is generated, analysed and presented becomes crucial as '…everything is potentially important to our understanding of knowledge production' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:305). Latour (2005:133) goes even further maintaining that the demand for methodological transparency be met by researchers:

> …keep[ing] track of all our moves, even the ones that deal with the very production of the account [i.e. the report] …. *Everything is data*… (emphasis original).

Subsequently, notebooks, journals, reflexive accounts, logbooks, notes from supervisory meeting, spreadsheets, as well as transcripts and audio records of interviews are considered sources of data. Similarly, emails and phone calls with prospective participants, supervisory meetings, annotations on thesis drafts and

---

[15] Usually when writing for an academic audience, 'data' in its singular form is referred to as 'datum', and 'data' is the plural. The writing convention is, however, changing to encompass notions of 'data' as singular, hence my sentence: 'For him, data is never 'Real', but a duplicate of 'Real' that always evades itself'.

conversations with critical friends would fall under this category. By way of illustration, I have included an example from my Reflexive Journal where I question my relationship with interview data:

> I have a problem with the assumption that 'data reveals itself' into fully coded themes where out of the swirling chaos, order is brought, like a galleon in full sail emerging from the sea mist. For it is much more complex; that is by immersing oneself in the data, reading and re-reading it in the light of other data can we start to read *into* the data. It is very much an active/conscious process, whereby out of the disorder, the researcher's eye makes the connections. The question is; will it mean the same after multiple iterations? And will I still make the same readings tomorrow? (February, 2019).

By reflexively analysing existing struggles, philosophical challenges, methodological encounters, and theoretical wrangling with all the questions and answers and rethinking that my research entails, I have used a similar approach to Usher:

> Being reflexively aware involves surfacing the pre-understandings which inform research and being aware of how these change in the course of research (1996:38–39).

Indeed, the relationship between self, methodology, data, and textual representation is rarely discussed but deeply problematic, so quality could be improved by carefully imbricating a '…critical subjectivity and self-consciousness' into reflexivity (Guba and Lincoln, 2005:199). Indeed:

> Reflexive writing strategies allow researchers to turn back in themselves, to examine how their presence or stance functions in relationship to their subject. Reflexive writers, ethically and politically self-aware, make themselves part of their own enquiry (Pelais, 2011:662).

Additionally, if data has multiple uses, then I can use it more than once to illuminate different issues. If data is indeed everywhere, then everything is data.

Taken together, these thoughts lead towards consideration of the purpose or significance of what I am doing. I (as researcher) am not objectively and impassively observing from a distance, for I am immersed in it, leaving my fingerprints all over and in the end dirtying the research process (Giardina, 2016; Krane, 2016). This close relationship between my own agency and researcher influence is manifested

through operations of power between and through the research process. How do I make decisions on what to read, what positions to explore, who to interview, what to ask, how to interpret or to read data, how to express a concept, how to refine the words on the page? As the researcher I must be mindful of whose voice or position I privilege, how I do this and why this matters (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). Correspondingly, it is important not to see power as a cold, impersonal abstract concept 'out there', but as a dynamic, intimate and personal operation. If power is thus so embodied, so I must embody it in my writing. This brings me back to consider these important poststructural concerns where important aspects of language and power are linked together involving subjectivity, reflexivity, positionality, contestation, and struggle (Richardson, 2000a; 2000b). If this self-consciousness and the role of the qualitative researcher are increasingly being questioned, then I should not consider myself to be '…an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer standing outside and above the text' (Bruner, 1993:1). In this understanding, relations of power must be a consideration.

So far this Chapter has focused on locating my points of departure for sports coaching research and presenting postmodernist notions of style, not only as a methodological approach, but as a political, individual, and social undertaking. The following Chapter charts my efforts towards creating a conceptual framework for my thesis.

CHAPTER IV – TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Procedural aspects of a conceptual framework

In my bid to develop the skills of a fledgling qualitative researcher, I buried myself in theory, including philosophy, ethics, methodology and method and was constantly asking myself what did it mean to be a qualitative investigator? The section that follows traces my adventures in the unknown, how I took those tentative steps into unfamiliar terrain and acknowledges the challenges that I faced. Moreover, it offers a discussion about how I have come to view my role as a researcher, consideration of the *bricoleur,* what it might mean for me and how I conceptualise my research and research origins. In the second part of this Chapter, I map out my paradigmatic choice and philosophical positioning and show how my research topic and agenda are best suited by a combination of postmodern thought and poststructuralist approaches.

Early on in my research journey, I read about the importance of conceptual frameworks, but was dismayed by the rigidity and dryness of the literature. Reading the following definition left me cold:

> A conceptual framework is a structure that organises the currents of thoughts that provide focus and direction to an inquiry. It is the organisation of ideas – the central concepts from theory, key findings from research, policy statements, professional wisdom – that will guide the project (Rallis and Rossman, 2012:88).

I was rattled. Was I supposed to follow suit? I wondered that if by taking this approach, would I be adding rigour to the process or is this a postpositivist deception? I found solace in Eisenhart's (1991) writings as she suggests that a conceptual framework would have more flexibility and adaptability in its adoption than the previous version. She defines it as '…a skeletal structure of justification rather than a skeletal structure of explanation based on formal logic' (1991:209).

Furthermore, Eisenhart offers that researchers can take many positions and different points are weighed up before being accepted or rejected. These concepts then serve as guides as to how the research is positioned, carried out and analysed and can be constantly updated, refined, or altered as new situations arise. She continues:

> Like theoretical frameworks, conceptual frameworks are based on previous research and literature, but conceptual frameworks are built from an array of current and possibly far reaching sources. The framework may be based on different theories and various aspects of practitioner knowledge, depending on exactly what the researcher thinks (and can argue) will be relevant to and important to address about a particular research problem and given the start-of-the-art regarding the research problem (Eisenhart, 1991:209).

Inspired by Eisenhart, I decided to reject Rallis and Rossman (2012) and continue reading. The section that follows details my efforts in seeking the best approach for me and my research. This took time.

The role of the researcher

As I outlined in Chapter III, I learned that in order to frame the process to the best of my ability, I needed to place myself at the heart of the operation. This is in keeping with taking a poststructural approach, adopting the qualitative methodologies identified towards the end of the Introduction Chapter. It is my intention to acknowledge my role as a researcher, to actively write myself into the text as a response to the *crisis of representation* where qualitative researchers began to question certain assumptions of research writing (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; 2004; Groom et al., 2014; Smith and Sparkes, 2016a). Indeed, both poststructuralism and postmodernism consider the role of the researcher, with the former politicising the aspect and the latter being concerned with personalising the process (Richardson, 2000a; St. Pierre, 2011). Notions such as disrupting the dominance of objectivity in writing, and acknowledging multiple voices, together with an increasing awareness of being reflexive began to take hold (Markula and Silk, 2011).

In this way, I align myself with Richardson (2000a) who considers writing to be a political act. She argues that the researcher is a subjective, thinking, feeling, emotional being who decides how to privilege certain ideas over others, makes decisions based on assumptions, values and beliefs and manages personal perspectives in their negotiation of the research process. To divorce oneself from the writing would result in an author-evacuated text, being apolitical and devoid of the lived experiences that make up the researcher (Purdy et al., 2008; Sparkes, 2000). Concerns over value-neutrality and silent authorship have been explored by a variety of authors (e.g. Back and Solomos, 1993; Becker, 1967; McDonald, 2002) and draws attention to the position, perspective, and politics of the researcher.

This has particular implications for me from a poststructuralist perspective. First, by emphasising the agency of the researcher-author, I hope to give voice to my own advancement into self-knowledge and understanding of my research themes (Alvesson, 2002). Second, that because I actively contribute to the creation of the philosophical triad of knowledge, truth, and reality '…each individual is part of power relations and thus part of the negotiation, circulation and alteration of discourses' (Markula and Silk, 2011:51). These notions prompt me as a researcher to be aware of my responsibilities to remain ethically-minded from the outset of any research activity due to an appreciation of the interpersonal and dynamic aspects of power manifested throughout any research enterprise (Avner et al., 2014). For further discussion of the ongoing nature of ethics in qualitative research, please see Chapter VII.

The concept of the bricoleur

The system of notions, conjectures, suppositions, ideas, and theories that inform the researcher should be considered as a vital aspect of the research design (Nelson et al., 2014a). Moreover, it is this perception of the conceptual framework being crafted and created and not discovered that is central to its application (Maxwell, 2012). It is here that the researcher needs to acknowledge themselves as the architect, actively (co)constructing and incorporating elements from elsewhere; a practice that could be described as *bricolage* (Bush and Silk, 2010; Nelson et al., 1992). Research into the genesis of this concept is offered by Bush (2008) who posited that qualitative researchers such as Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Kincheloe (2001) appropriated the term *bricoleur* from Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (1966). Just as Lévi-Strauss uses the word in describing an artisan who makes use of the tools at hand to accomplish a task, Kincheloe (2001) evolves the concept as a process which includes '…multiple methods of inquiry and with diverse theoretical and philosophical notions of the various elements encountered in the research act' (Bush and Silk, 2010:556). Indeed, the concept of the *bricoleur* appears imbricated within the qualitative research process itself, embracing not only diverse approaches, but also in the integration of those approaches (Frost et al., 2010). Furthermore, advocates of the *bricolage* such as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that it helps researchers problematise knowledge-creation practices and acknowledge the inherent incongruities of the lived world. Additionally, they posit that:

> The combination of multiple methodological practices, and empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:5).

Similar to the process of developing a conceptual framework, research is:

> …never about finding 'the right theory,' or demonstrating one's theoretical acumen, or playing some kind of theoretical chess game of one-up-manship. It is about understanding what is going on, and therefore, it is about finding out whatever theoretical positions will enable that project (Wright, 2001:134).

Kincheloe (2005) substantiates the active role of the researcher by suggesting that a *bricoleur* consciously chooses from the tools available as opposed to impassively applying the universally appropriate methodologies. For me, this is no easy task. First, in developing my research interest I have had to learn a new language, both in terms of research methodology and in the unfamiliar field of social science; second, to develop practical modes of inquiry and cultivate technical skills; and third, to learn how to utilise judgment or practice practical wisdom (Schwandt, 2000). There was so much to learn; I felt overwhelmed at times. My reading took me down so many interesting roads and I could not do justice to them all. One of the hardest things was targeting my reading effectively for I found that I was reading too broadly. I took clarity and refuge in my supervisory meetings where I was able to discuss the literature and for my DoS to offer some guidance on how to be more targeted in my approach. Most of the time, I found these meetings immensely valuable and positive, but occasionally I felt unsettled as I struggled to let go of previous assumptions and academic practices that were no longer fit for my purpose.

In general, there is a wealth of published information pertaining to becoming proficient in the language of qualitative research and honing associated technical skills of research methodology (e.g. Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; 2011; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Lincoln et al., 2011; Patton, 2015; Ravitch and Riggan, 2017). Likewise, this is mirrored from a sports-informed research approach (e.g. Andrews et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2012; Markula and Silk, 2011; Nelson et al., 2014b; Smith and Sparkes, 2016a; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Perhaps less obvious are texts and advice on how to engender practical wisdom. Perhaps in this regard, one has to learn by doing, as experienced and reflected upon in the doctoral process itself.

By committing to such an intellectually and academically challenging process, the PhD route is so much more than the acquisition of pre-nominal letters and epitomises the value of experiential or heuristic learning embodied within an andragogic setting (Kamler and Thomson, 2014; Phillips et al., 2015).

Topographical familiarity and purpose

In keeping with the operational elements of conducting research, the research journey is not wholly mapped out prior to starting, but rather proceeds along many routes, exploring the terrain, navigating diversions, experiencing hold ups, blockades, getting lost, or coming across dead ends. Mapping the landscape becomes vital and having an appreciation of the terrain that one is likely to encounter is arguably essential (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007; Creswell, 2007). Developing a flexible conceptual framework can help with establishing the parameters for the inquiry, allowing the researcher to communicate their research parameters and confidently locate their research clearly (Maxwell, 2012). I offer that this plasticity is useful for it takes time, energy, continual reflection, interrogation of the self and methods used, together with engaging in dialogue with professional mentors and critical friends to evolve an understanding and appreciation of the critical aspects of the research area. This process is accompanied by extensive and focused reading with continual evaluation and analysis in a hermeneutical loop which never appears complete (Schwandt, 2000; Silk et al., 2005). Nonetheless, with patience, layers of meaning and moments of insight are created leading to spirals of overlapping and intersecting notions which take considerable effort to metamorphose.

The Introduction Chapter maps out some of the issues associated with power and charts the difficulties associated with studying this polysemic and challenging concept, both in the sports coaching literature and from other fields. Although I have chosen to focus my study on the elite coach-athlete relationship(s) to explicate the workings of power from a relational perspective, I am using it as a

vehicle to better understand power relations and coaching practices within elite athletics. A substantial amount of time was devoted to reading, annotating, and assessing the broad field of the sociology of sport which included a self-taught intensive exploration of sociological terminology, methodologies, theory, and theorists. After familiarising myself with critical sociology, I became interested in the concept of physical cultural studies (Bush and Silk, 2010; Pringle and Falcous, 2018; Silk and Andrews, 2011). Following on from this, and together with invaluable and productive discussions with my DoS, I was able to continue my reading of the current sports coaching literature with a more critical eye. What follows is a brief summary of my position to date which contributes to my conceptual framework.

Identifying perspectives and background to the research

How much of the self to leave in or leave out?

In order to fully conceptualise the area of study and to formulate a framework which directs the research, methodology, and writing style, I offer further perspectives on locating the role of the researcher within the text. For my part, I believe that it can be advantageous in providing a personal background linking my research interests to the mode of inquiry. I join with Rallis and Rossman (2012) and Ravitch and Riggan (2017) who argue for the centrality of the researcher, including exploring personal perspectives, reflecting on existing research and evaluating their application to the proposed study. By extension, in recognising the significance of the storied self and the notion that identity is narratively fashioned (Atkins, 2004; Smith and Sparkes, 2008), I propose the reader can understand the position and purpose of the study with greater clarity. This is something that writer Hunter S. Thompson valued as he advocated that the '…writer must be a participant in the scene, while he [sic] is writing it – or at least typing it' (2003:106). Interestingly, although the sports coaching literature has only recently begun to support the

various ways of writing and presenting research (Markula and Silk, 2011; Groom et al., 2014; Smith and Sparkes, 2008; 2009), the choice to position oneself in the text is often left to the writer. Indeed, some authors consider:

> …that representation is a choice, a textual strategy, rather than a specific marker of academic quality in its own right. We could write ourselves into or out of our research but the decision to do so is exactly that; a decision made by the researcher (Groom et al., 2014:95-96).

Nonetheless, I counter this position and propose that acknowledging the positionality and subjectivity of the author-writer is not only essential, but is a vital indication of academic excellence. Hence, I support the view that '…the centrality of the researcher's ideological stance and "voice" constitutes the power of agency of qualitative research' (Burnett, 2016:463). Therefore, researchers, myself included, have an obligation to recognise and value their influence and choices on the creation of a research paper, to own their standpoint and acknowledge their role in the co-construction of meaning (Frost et al., 2010). To limit the potency of a subjective social reality is to take a more postpositivist approach, denying the interaction of pervasive power relations and the process of knowledge creation. As these themes are an important aspect of poststructuralism, I maintain that the researcher is instrumental in co-creating the ontological landscape and topography of the research endeavour. Thus:

> …poststructuralist researchers as knowledge producers have to locate themselves as integral aspects of these relations as they create, structure, conduct and write up each qualitative research work within the constraints of a particular social/academic context (Markula and Silk, 2011:75).

Research origins

In writing this section, I was curious to explore how my interest and immersion in all things sport may have shaped my academic interest and informed my journey into sports coaching research. As a child, I was captivated by the Soviet female gymnasts, Elena Mukhina, Olga Korbert and Nellie Kim and emulated them from the age of five at Crewe and Nantwich Gymnastics Club. Gymnastics appeared to be significant to me for its own sake, but I offer that this background informed my engagement with all sports that followed, including athletics, team sports, and outdoor pursuits. Gymnastics helped inculcate a sense of discipline and determination to succeed as well as engendering elements of physical mastery, coordination, agility, flexibility, and strength (Arkaev and Suchilin, 2004). Perhaps these aptitudes also had an influence on my academic performances as my self-belief and drive may have contributed towards putting myself under immense pressure to succeed. To my regret, I never made national standard in gymnastics, but I found joy in the kinaesthetic experience, for it was a catharsis and an escape. Additionally, it was a sport where I could find a sense of self and experiment with dangerous acrobatics in the (relative) safety of the gymnasium (Russell, 2005). After nine years I switched allegiance to athletics and continued to participate in many diverse sports throughout my school, college and university years. Specifically, I enjoyed the notoriety that my more adventurous sports activities gave me and I sought pleasure in risk taking.

I maintain that the variety of forms that sport took, the thrill of competing against myself and others, and delight in the social aspects ensured that exercise and physical activity played a large part in the construction of my sense of self and identity (Houle et al., 2010). On reflection, although I delighted in sport, I do not think I ever really achieved enough as a performer to sate my appetite. Moving forwards, perhaps being aware of some of the hardships of being a sportsperson has made me more empathic to the athletes I encountered in my interviews.

I consider that I wanted to tell their stories and to do justice to the accounts we constructed together.

Notwithstanding the above, I also had experiences from a coach's perspective. I started early and led my first session aged 16 at a Young Athletes' Development course at the then Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education. This was quite ambitious given my age, but it provided me with a seminal experience of what it might mean to be a coach. I was armed with nothing more than confidence and self-belief, but it was invaluable in providing me with a taste of the social context that characterises sports coaching. I would later return as a postgraduate student involved with teacher-training and in 1999 I graduated with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Secondary Physical Education (PE) at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), carrying on a family tradition. During my late teens and early twenties, I practiced my coaching skills as a community sports coach and benefited from this early exposure as it transferred into an educational setting, augmenting my academic qualities developed as an undergraduate. Additionally, perhaps this role has made me sympathetic to exploring the challenges of the lived experiences of the sports coach.

My interest in sport was also reflected in my academic choices as an undergraduate at the University of Birmingham. There, I followed a multidimensional programme, graduating in 1995 with a BSc(Hons) in Recreation and Sports Science. Reflecting on the units chosen and although I embarked on a largely science based teaching career, I offer that it was the socio-cultural context of sport and exercise that intrigued me the most. And yet I was challenged. I was more comfortable with the security that the bio-sciences provided. In contrast, the socio-cultural world demanded answers that were more elusive and esoteric, posing both a challenge and a thrill.

These qualifications and aptitudes opened the door to a lecturing career in Further Education (FE). I taught for over 15 years at a variety of FE institutions on a wide range of courses and levels with varying degrees of pastoral responsibility. Reflecting on my educational career, I have been struck with exploring what makes potent learning experiences, what are the conditions for successful teaching, and how to manage student and institutional expectations (Huddleston and Unwin, 2013; Wallace, 2007). From these considerations, I contend that parallels between the manifestation and operation of power dynamics in an educational setting, specifically the relational aspects of power between student and lecturer, can also be made between athlete and coach in a sport setting. The context differs, nonetheless, but I have always been fascinated by the interactive nature of teaching and in the subconscious movement of power between actors. Tacitly, I envisaged that the effective use of power directly influences the quality of the educative experience and enhances student development; a position reflected by Richmond and McCroskey (1984) in their seminal series exploring the role of teacher power in education. Their position is explicated further in this much cited paper:

> Teacher power (previously defined as the capacity for influencing others) exists only in so far as students *perceive* it to exist and accept it… . If the perception is absent, the power is absent, no matter what the teacher may think (Richmond and McCroskey, 1984:125-126 emphasis added).

I take this focus on perception between student and teacher to be analogous to Elias's (2001) or Hargreaves's (1986) relational interpretation of power. In my professional experience, I see power as something that cannot be assumed or taken for granted as it is continually being played out, operating both perceptibly and imperceptibly through anticipations and desires (Cherryholmes, 1988). Correspondingly, power:

> Operates visibly through formal public criteria that must be satisfied. It operates invisibly through the way individuals (teachers, administrators, and university based educators, for example) think of themselves and act (Cherryholmes, 1988:35).

Nevertheless, survival in FE is hard due to the multiple pressures of government legislation targets and quotas, an impersonal organisational culture, a repressive

audit ethos and an irresistible march towards the subsuming effects of neoliberalism (Bush et al., 2013; Robson, 2007). By 2011 I was completely disillusioned with the sector and wished to challenge myself by completing a Masters degree with the twin aims of pushing my intellectual limits and gaining a further qualification to enter the world of HE as an academic. The Masters programme at MMU was an epiphany for me; the dimorphic contrast between the FE and HE incarnations of myself could not have been more sharply drawn. Entry in to this thought-provoking world was disorientating at first and then satisfying as I immersed myself into new ways of thinking and practicing long dormant academic skills (Merriam, 2001).

At first, I concentrated solely on Exercise Physiology as a pathway, with a strong emphasis on developing bio-scientific modes of inquiry that led to understanding the sporting body in action. Reflecting on this period of metamorphosis and self-discovery leads me to consider two points. First, the Masters greatly influenced my thinking in terms that I seemed to be adopting the dominant technocratic discourse of the current climate together with being inveigled into positivistic research traditions (Andrews, 2008). This led to an unconscious, uncritical acceptance of the prevailing bio-medical discourse (Bush and Silk, 2010). Second, it was a single assessment in a Research Methods Unit that rekindled my desire to learn more about the socio-cultural aspect of exercise and sport and to branch out of the narrower performance-focused context of physiology. Presentation of this qualitative piece at the 2nd International Cluster for Research into Sports Coaching (CRiC) and subsequent invitation to submit to *Sports Coaching Review* as a journal article, cemented my commitment to new modes of inquiry. As a result, I altered course and presented an interpretive phenomenological analysis of an elite high jump coach as my Masters project. Ultimately, this venture paid off and I was awarded my Masters Degree in Exercise and Sport (Distinction) together with the *2013-14 Les Burwitz Award for Outstanding Contribution to Research* from the Department of Exercise and Sport Science. I consider this background to be important as it charts my academic development in preparation to starting the

doctoral process itself. This success did not come easily, however, as I was still teaching in FE during the first year of my Masters and managing the personal demands of a young family; responsibilities that did not always co-exist amicably!

Ultimately, the pressures at South Cheshire College became untenable and I resigned my position in 2012 (Huddleston and Unwin, 2013). Rather than compromise my principles and subject myself to unethical working practices and a toxic working environment, I refused to be dominated by the unequal power relations between employer and employee, rebelling against unjust treatment. By way of contrast, I found that staff at the University were supportive, inspiring, with a respect for the individual and a level of autonomy missing from my previous job. Indeed, my success on the Masters programme vindicated my decision to leave FE and helped to rebuild my sense of identity that was negatively affected by resigning. I had worked all my adult life and I underestimated just how much social capital I, along with others, had invested in the role of lecturer and how much it affected my self-worth. Happily, my hard work resulted in being offered a two-year Associate Lecturer position at MMU within the Department of Exercise and Sport which marked the start of my move towards working in HE. It was during this time that I worked closely with Dr. Bill Taylor, who later became my DoS, in the shaping and moulding of a potential PhD.

After considerable investment from Dr. Taylor, a five-year Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) position became available starting in September 2015. I consider that the dual role of the GTA (which includes a research [PhD] position) provides me with a unique binary perspective from both a lecturer and student viewpoint, as it allows me to experience the world from the perspective of the other. Yet I found that teaching in one paradigm (physiology) and undertaking research in another sometimes imbued the activities with tension and conflict. On one hand it gave me a window into an alternative world, a split view giving me insights into the strengths and weaknesses of each (Alvesson, 2002; Mallet and Tinning 2014). On the other hand, the philosophical positions and approaches were so diametrically

opposed that I felt fractured by the efforts required to do justice to both of them. I felt pulled in two different directions at times as my own beliefs were challenged and my safe postpositivist leanings were scrutinised. What I have found more satisfying, however, is that I have been able to continually modify and refine the focus and aims of my research. Having a considerable degree of autonomy over the research conception and design suits my character, professional approach, and experience as I am not comfortable in being micro-managed and prefer to work collaboratively with my supervisory team.

Reflecting on this story and the elements of the narrative suggests that I emphasise the sensitising lens through which I view the world (Pitner and Sakamoto, 2005). I come to the research as an adult woman in her forties, with life experience and a strong sense of identity, self-possession and professional pride. Yet the transition from educator to an autonomous research student has seen moments of crippling self-doubt and terror with the enormity and scale of the academic undertaking (Usher and Edwards, 1994). I have found that developing an outward persona who is confident and enthusiastic helps negate feelings of ineptitude. The creation of a front ties in with the Goffmanian concepts of impression management and dramaturgical perspective by which a social actor manipulates social situations strategically (Goffman, 1959). Both my coaching and professional background have allowed me to inhabit different aspects of myself and to explore the interrelations between roles, personality and individuality.

My social background privileges me as the daughter of educated white, middle-class parents, both of whom were teachers. Personally, I do not have to contend with the discriminatory effects of race, sexuality or disability, nor am I financially pressured, as I am lucky enough to have the emotional and fiscal security of a partner. Nonetheless, experiencing the world as female provides me with some perspective on how society treats certain groups of people as 'other' and have experienced or observed prejudice in varied forms (Smith, 1987). The inexorable influence of gender politics has contributed to shaping my experiences and

worldview, sensitising me to social inequalities. By being aware of the many intersecting layers of society, organisations, institutions, and in interactions with others allows me to be cognisant of social inequalities, precipitating forms of overt and covert discrimination.

Questions of reflection, reflexivity, and the development of a critical consciousness

The creation of an individual's perspective is a complex phenomenon which includes their lived experiences, disposition, attributes, education, and socio-cultural tendencies and/or attributes. I have attempted to outline a brief narrative about my reality above. Further to my story, some authors suggest that we possess multiple social identities; some public and some private which are characteristic of the different spheres that we inhabit at particular times and places (Bruner, 1993; Jenkins, 2014; Reinharz, 1997; Sermijn et al., 2008). This contributes to the notion of standpoint theory where perspective, experience, and social position feeds into the production of knowledge, in particular situated knowledge (Smith, 1987; Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002). Being aware of the interaction between multiple standpoint theories and the development of critical consciousness can be a valuable skill in the armoury of conducting qualitative research.

In order to explore this, I consider that a working definition of critical consciousness can be useful. Interestingly, the following emphasises the importance of power relations to the practice by describing it as a:

> …process of reflecting upon and examining how our own biases, assumptions and cultural worldviews affect the ways that we perceive diversity and power dynamics at a personal level (Pitner and Sakamoto, 2005:685).

Being aware of one's critical consciousness is a valid tool in reflecting upon one's performance in an educative setting, be it as an educator, adult learner, sports coach, or athlete. I posit that in undertaking this research, I have become more sensitised to the effects of the audit culture of neoliberalism that has pervaded

many aspects of working life, especially in the educative setting (Bush et al., 2013). Professional practices are measured, quantified, standardised, and reviewed in a positivist manner which I consider, along with Shore (2008), as imposing methods of control onto a workforce. Benchmarking and performance indicators being two such measures that aim to improve staff performativity and behaviour.

As a university, MMU is no different in this regard from any other UK Higher Education Institution. Here, as part of continuous professional development, lecturing staff are exhorted to reflect on their practice, engage in peer observation, and submit to annual reviews in the guise that it '…it deepens learning and enhances practice' (Race, 2007:223). Owing to the prevalence of these narrowly focused positivist practices, we have been encouraged to follow models such as Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988) and Brookfield's four lenses of critical reflection (2015) to analyse our practices as HE educators. And here lies the problem within this practice: I argue that there is a critical discord between these somewhat simplistic, poorly theorised, and positivistic models and my adoption of poststructural theories and sensibilities. The effect is to shift the focus away from the organisation and to inveigle the employee to scrutinise themselves and lay bare their working practices leading to self-surveillance and the techniques of domination (Foucault, 1980; 1988; 1991). Not only is the nature of academics' work distorted '…by trying to measure it in ridiculously inappropriate ways', but these multiple measures of governance reduce the agency of individual members of staff (Shore, 2008:291). And we are complicit in it. Manley and Williams's (2019) paper encapsulates my anxiety and suspicion of these incipient technologies and permeating surveillance techniques, encouraging me to question their operation in multiple fields. For me, development of my critical consciousness and reflectivity has challenged my naïve assumptions of working in this sector and the discord that I feel (Usher, 1997; Usher et al., 1997).

Although it is not enough just to reflect, as Reed et al. (1997) purport that continuous reflection must be accompanied by action to address social injustice. Furthermore, after reading more widely, some authors are more careful than others in making distinctions between terms and the multiple meanings they carry (Berger, 2015; D'Cruz et al., 2007; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Some, however, appear to emphasise an overlap between critical consciousness and critical reflection in, for example, the experience of adult learners in the doctoral setting (Mezirow, 1998) or in social work (Pease and Fook, 1999). What has been a challenge for me is to make sense of competing dialogues and discourses in terms of learning how to think for myself. In doing so, I have borrowed from Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) by attempting to analytically question how my identity has been shaped by dominant ideologies in the development of my critical consciousness.

I have found that the processual requirements of doctoral research encourage a high degree of critical self-reflection and self-interrogatory practices. Together, they contribute to building up reflexive knowledge, exploring the process of how people obtain more in-depth knowledge about themselves (Leonard, 1997). In order to differentiate between reflection and reflexivity, I turn to Berger (2015) who offers that:

> Reflexivity is commonly viewed as the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (220).

This is an active conscious process that to me requires researchers to interrogate their own thoughts, emotions and feelings, that builds upon the process of reflecting upon one's actions and decision making. Some offer that being purely reflective in isolation is a futile attempt at objectivity, of distancing themselves from their practice and knowledge creation (D'Cruz et al., 2007). By limiting myself to prescriptive and reductive educative models of reflective practice (Brookfield, 2015; Gibbs 1998), I would be betraying any pretentions I have towards postmodern appreciations of critical consciousness or reflexivity. Therefore, by being cognisant of our role in the research process, as qualitative researchers we

attempt to acknowledge our own positions without diluting the voices of the participants we purport to represent (Jones et al., 2012). In this way, research can never be dispassionate nor wholly detached. Partiality is a resource, and I need to show how I draw upon my own narrative to comprehend my participants and to interpret the research that follows (Bott, 2010).

Yet this process is time consuming, difficult and continuous, insomuch that it can only contribute to acknowledging the position, standpoint, and discourse of the self if undertaken with care and attention. Correspondingly, though appreciation of the 'reflexive turn' has increased over the years, where meaning is constructed as opposed to being discovered, at the beginning of the twenty-first century there was scant guidance on how to practically accomplish this (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). In the years that followed the literature has caught up with attempts at deciphering terminology and exploring applied practice (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018; Barrett et al., 2020; Berger, 2015; D'Cruz et al., 2007; Dowling, 2006; Finlay 2006; Luttrell, 2010).

Paradigm choice: towards a methodological approach

The proposition that sports coaching as an academic discipline within the broader field of sport science is now viewed as a legitimate area of study (Gilbert and Trudel, 2004; Nelson et al., 2014c; Potrac et al., 2013). Although rapidly gaining ground on other sub-disciplines such as sport psychology and exercise physiology, sports coaching has not been equally valued (Jones, 2006c). In particular, sports coaching sociology is a relatively new area of research that has flirted with a variety of paradigms in an attempt to add rigour and elevate its academic standing. These other ways of conducting research, however, have been heavily resisted and/or viewed with suspicion as being out of keeping with the dominant discourse of

performance-based knowledge that is reductionist in nature. This is in keeping with Andrews (2008:46) who despairs over the '…instantiation of an epistemological hierarchy that privileges positivist over postpositive, quantitative over qualitative, and predictive over interpretive ways of knowing'. The language relates to notions of dominant discourse and accepted ways of doing that are established into sports science and coaching fields which favour specific approaches and methodologies. Namely, adherence to positivistic paradigms or quantitative, reductional styles that ignore the social context are favoured over qualitative, interpretive, critical, or poststructural approaches.

The often quoted Kuhn (1970) has been credited for bringing the word paradigm into widespread use in the academic community (Markula and Silk, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2015). Appearing in the postscript in the second edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Kuhn (1970:175) described a paradigm as '…the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by members of a given community'. Four decades later, academics are still debating how best to define the term as the source below suggests that:

> A paradigm is an overarching set of beliefs that provides the parameters – how researchers understand reality and the nature of truth, how they understand what is knowledge, how they act and the role they undertake, how they understand participants and how they disseminate knowledge – of a given research question (Markula and Silk, 2011:25).

Knowledge of different research paradigms and traditions is arguably important as they provide a scaffold for considering and conducting investigations into sport coaching with precision and integrity (Mallett and Tinning, 2014). Likewise, they delineate borderlines for the researcher's codes, guiding principles, and activities chosen and portray a fundamental awareness of the world they are studying (Markula and Silk, 2011). Moreover, Guba and Lincoln chose to portray paradigms as a '…a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:107). Therefore, it is to philosophy that we can turn to if we are to fully gauge how best to position ourselves in research.

Considerations of sticky concepts such as truth, knowledge, and the nature of reality can help explicate our theoretical position. Although Guba and Lincoln are not recognised as poststructuralists themselves, but rather writers in a broad qualitative tradition, they have suggested that the way in which paradigms respond to three fundamental questions can delineate their scope, distinguishing between their varied forms. They include interrelated questions about ontology ('… what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?'), epistemology ('what is the relationship between the knower and what can be known?') and methodology (how can the inquirer [would be knower] go about finding out whatever he or she already believes can be known?') (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). The way in which these questions can be answered have:

> …further implications for how each paradigm positions itself on various issues, such as the aims and purpose of the inquiry, researcher posture, the role of values in the inquiry, the criteria used to judge the quality of the inquiry and the nature of 'voice' within the inquiry (Smith and Sparkes, 2016b:3).

Ontology and epistemology are foundational aspects of philosophy (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) and their application to unravelling the research process is essential. Nevertheless, understanding the nature of what knowledge is and how it is acquired is far from straightforward (Stone, 2008), as this has been an area of contestation and debate for millennia (Moses and Knutson, 2012). These linguistic and philosophic difficulties exemplify some of the challenges of the doctoral process.

A question of ontology

Ontological discussions revolve around the nature of reality and existence (Creswell, 2007). These are foundational elements of philosophy, replete with questions '… about the nature of social reality, including what we can learn about this reality and how we can do so' (Leavy, 2014:3). Concisely, ontology is the study of being, of existence itself (Crotty, 1998), leading us to consider what it means to

be and defining what is real in the world (Schuh and Barab, 2007). Such ambitious, abstract thinking leads towards questions about the nature of truth and different ways of knowing; if something exists, how would we know?

Explorations of knowledge follow particular paths. Some take the ontological supposition that there is a singular, external reality in which:

> …all 'worthwhile' knowledge is knowable. It is already out there waiting to be discovered, measured, and otherwise apprehended by science (Mallett and Tinning, 2014:11).

Traditionally, those following a positivistic, empirical scientific paradigm may adopt this ontological position, focusing on one reality and one truth which can be reduced to knowable facts. This realist or external view of reality is sometimes appropriated by those qualitative researchers who believe that a fixed and impartial reality exists independently from an individual and is foisted on their consciousness, governed by the rules of cause and effect (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Some interpretive qualitative researchers, however, consider that the social world is something that is created within individuals' '…subjectivities, interests, emotions and values' (Sparkes, 1992:25). In this way, the human mind becomes crucial in the construction of a social reality that is plastic and multi-layered as '…qualitative researchers adopt a *relativist* or *internal* ontology' (Sparkes and Smith, 2014:11 emphasis original). Furthermore, the temptation to homogenise qualitative researchers into a single camp by these authors is telling, for this is a broad church, with various viewpoints and subjectivities. For example, though interpretivists allow the notion of numerous social realities, poststructuralists posit that the world is comprised of disintegrated and disputed truths which are then used as a vehicle for thinking differently (Avner et al., 2014).

A question of epistemology

At its core, epistemology asks questions about the relationship between the researcher and that being studied (Creswell, 2007). From this, we can problematise the process of thinking itself in terms of the truths we seek and in our beliefs as researchers (Pallas, 2001). Thus, epistemological concerns are centred on who can be a knower and the nature and acquisition of knowledge that informs the research process; how one personifies the role of researcher and the relationship between the investigator and the participants of research (Harding, 1987; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004).

Epistemological issues can be explored from a variety of perspectives relating to the nature and scope of the '…origins, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge' (Reber, 1995:256). Researchers can be concerned with the understanding of knowledge that is propositional or theoretically driven (Moser, 1987), practical or performance-competence based (Arnold, 1988), or tacit or embodied know-how (Polanyi, 1966). Yet from a research-informed perspective, the epistemological stance is a vital consideration as inherent in the theoretical standpoint and, therefore, embodied in the methodologies chosen (Crotty, 1998).

Qualitative researchers like myself reject rigid epistemological assumptions of objective knowledge creation, instead building on the ontological position of multiple realities where knowledge statements are subjectively created (Leavy, 2014; Mallet and Tinning, 2014). As opposed to being neutral or value-free, investigators are sensitive to how their individual, professional, or political attributes or responsibilities influence all properties of their research (Leavy, 2014). This is what Sparkes and Smith term '…subject-subject relationship as opposed to subject-object dualism' (2014:13). Their purpose is to decipher and comprehend the world from the participants' perspective, for situation, context, and timing is

paramount (Jones et al., 2012). The qualitative researcher believes that '…it is impossible to separate an objective "out there" reality from interpretations or effects of the time/place in which it occurs' (Neuman, 2014:95). Furthermore, in order:

> To produce social science knowledge, we must inductively observe, interpret and reflect on what other people are saying and doing in specific social context while we simultaneously reflect on our own experiences and interpretations (Neuman, 2014:95).

Philosophical positioning and paradigm choice?

The important question of where to locate my research is grounded in which approach will best help me realise my research aims. If my preoccupation with power in the coach-athlete relationship(s) is to provoke a newer and more nuanced understanding of elite sporting systems, then I need to consider how power operates in the research process itself (St. Pierre, 2011). Thus, I need to take a more radical, difficult, and dangerous approach that is philosophically framed as a poststructural approach, as this engenders a highly critical sensibility where knowledge, subjectivity, and reality are interrelated and problematised.

This is not to privilege one paradigmatic approach over another, but to consider the grounding principles, ontological, and epistemological underpinnings of the research area, the questions it engenders, and the conceptual framework and position of the researcher before committing to a specified approach. This is not a process that can be rushed, for adopting an unsuitable approach may stymie the quality of the overall academic endeavour.

In sports science and coaching research, paradigms can be framed in various ways, resulting in a blurring of terms. For example, the book chapters of Nelson et al. (2014b) talk in terms of logical positivism (Smith and Smoll, 2014), interpretivism (Potrac et al., 2014) and poststructuralism (Avner et al., 2014). By comparison, Markula and Silk (2011) extend the remit to discuss logical empiricism, logical

positivism, postpositivism, humanism, interpretivism, postmodern and poststructuralism. There is considerable overlap between the positions adopted by both texts, but they have been useful in helping me position my research.

I have taken care to establish that my research is qualitative in nature and grounded in a combination of postmodern approaches and poststructural theorisations, where space, temporal understanding, and context are important. Thus, it is the situatedness of these fluid and variable relationships that become important when observed from a power perspective. I offer that using a combination of poststructural theorisations and postmodernist fieldwork methods within the research framework is justified as these paradigms offer the greatest scope for fully investigating the subtleties and operations of power within the coach-athlete relationship(s). Such methodologies are based on the epistemological and ontological position that there are contested and fragmented truths and that knowledge, reality, and truth are socially constructed and reproduced through evolving discourses (Markula and Silk, 2011). Thus, by taking a poststructuralist approach my research moves power further away from a rudimentary binary relationship (Jones et al., 2004) to encompass Foucauldian notions of power being decentred, nebulous, and dispersed (Jones et al., 2011).

Consequently, this academic study marks a shift away from previous paradigms such as positivism or interpretivism due to a rejection of universal metanarratives, dualistic interpretations of power and a focus on the humanist self (Avner et al., 2014). Adopting a poststructural approach allows for the epistemological position that knowledge is not only subjectively created and has multiple meanings, but questions why certain discourses dominate and others are marginalised (Avner et al., 2014). It also allows for the existence of fluctuating and contested discourses that are themselves borne out of certain power relations (Markula and Silk, 2011).

Utilising this approach, I aim to:

> …reveal power relations involved in the production and dissemination of coaching knowledge, the ways in which these input on how we understand and practice sports coaching and some of the problematic effects of these dominant ways of understanding and practicing sport coaching (Avner et al., 2014:45).

This Chapter has explored elements that comprise the formation of a conceptual framework that guides my research approach. It has cumulated in a section that presents some of the philosophical underpinnings that support my research and provides a bridge towards the first Methodological and Methods Chapter that follows.

CHAPTER V - ADOPTING A POSTSTRUCTURAL AND POSTMODERN METHODOLOGY AND METHOD (PART 1)

Considerations of philosophy, process, and power

Before continuing to frame the operation of this PhD in the light of continually evolving power relations, I offer that an extended section on the nature and application of the broader philosophical, intellectual, and cultural connotations of postmodernism and poststructuralism is warranted. Without an attempt at outlining the main tenets and key concepts of these theoretical approaches, I would find it difficult to evaluate their methodological effectiveness in driving my research. This has also been a formidable and ambitious Chapter for me to write as it represents a key bridging section in my work. What this section does not claim to do is offer a comprehensive account of the history or development of these two interconnected, yet competing theoretical strands of multiple positions and schools of thought. Nor does it seek to provide a thorough explication and analysis of their major players for this has already been accomplished elsewhere (for poststructuralism see Belsey, 2002; Han, 2013; Harland, 2013; Palmer, 2007; Peters, 2012: for postmodernism see Grenz, 1996; Hall, 1996b; Hollinger, 1994; Rosenau, 1992; Sim, 2013). I could also turn to the original writings of Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Kristeva, Barthes, and Baudrillard, amongst others, to engender a more intimate familiarity with these ways of knowing. Instead, I offer up my position that is predicated on the positions, sensibilities, substance, and style of both approaches in concert. But I confess that I started from a position of ignorance of these concepts; not only were they formidable, they threw me completely at times. I was recommended to and consumed Nelson et al's. (2014b) excellent *Research Methods in Sports Coaching* text and Markula and Silk's (2011) outstanding *Qualitative Research for Physical Culture.* Both gave me access to new ways of thinking and opened the door to other valuable texts.

Postmodernism and poststructuralism – two sides of the same coin?

At first glance, the two approaches are very similar; they are both prefixed by 'post', which can be suggestive of superseding something, and they are both bound by a preoccupation with analogous ontological and epistemological concerns. In the first instance, both postmodernism and poststructuralism are often framed as something that follows on, a refutation of their respective predecessors, modernism and structuralism (Mease, 2016; Lather, 1993; Sim, 2013). This was, indeed, my interpretation for many months; could I not just accept that they were just chronological concepts? Conversations with my DoS and further reading nagged at my conscience – there was more to this than their temporal positioning. I turn, instead, to a more nuanced interpretation by examining the interdependence between these terms, for:

> The "post" attached to structuralism and modernism signals both a response and a critique. "Post" movements are not so much absolute rejections of, but extensions born out of the failing of structural and modern attempts to adequately describe the world (Mease, 2016:2-3).

In the second instance, poststructural critique endeavours '…to describe the ontological groundings that postmodernists assume in their attempts to play with and challenge accepted truths and norms' (Mease, 2016:2). Both are incredulous of a single reality and argue that reality is ruptured into numerous worlds that is more reminiscent of a pastiche (Jameson, 1988). This has diverse implications for multiple meaning making and the creation of knowledge[s] that comes about through perpetual cultural change (Markula and Silk, 2011). It is, therefore, no surprise that the manifold ways of seeing and understanding the world have engendered a variety of approaches, theories, sensibilities, conditions, or practices all loosely gathered under the banner of postmodernism or poststructuralism (Markula and Silk, 2011; Smart, 1993; Usher and Edwards, 1994).

Consequently, I learned that these multiple strands complicate any effort to contain them in a coherent definition for, 'Postmodernism and poststructural analysis include diverse and contradictory critiques that resist, subvert, and refuse any structural formation' (St. Pierre, 2011:615). As Sarup (1993:144) wryly observes, 'There are so many similarities between poststructuralist theories and postmodernist practices that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between them'. Indeed, Sarup and others (Hohendahl, 1986; Sim, 2013) either use the terms interchangeably and synonymously, denoting a fluidity between the positions, or emphasise their similarities. The situation is further complicated by the way in which seminal writers and thinkers are viewed as belonging (or not) to each faction:

> Although most agree that Derrida is a poststructuralist (even though he does not identify himself as such), Foucault, Barthes, and Lyotard can be claimed by either camp and often are. And the French feminists (Kristeva 1980, Irigaray 1985, Cixous 1986) are sometimes viewed as proponents of poststructuralism (e.g. Weedon 1987). The lack of clear definition reflects the purposeful elusiveness of work that can be variously classified as poststructural and/or postmodern (Agger, 1991:111-112).

Indeed, the nature of both means that they actively resist definition. Nevertheless, other authors (Aitchison, 2005; Peters, 1999; Rosenau, 1992) are cautionary declaring that 'Poststructuralism is commonly conflated and confused with postmodernism' (Aitchison, 2005:430) leading to a lack of precision in meaning and interpretation. Some authors, though acknowledging their overlapping and mutually informing discourse, assert that they are distinctions between the two terms and how they operate (Lather, 1993; St. Pierre, 2011; Usher and Edwards, 1994). For example, Huyssen (1984:330) '…insist[s] on the fundamental non-identity of the two phenomena'. So, what does this mean for me, my research position, and the way that I think?

Writing and framing my approaches to research

My postmodernist sensibilities and poststructuralist leanings cause me to reject rigidly applied scientific methods and emphasis on singular objective truths (Belsey, 2002; Coakley and Pike, 2014; Sarup, 1993; St. Pierre, 2000). Alternatively, they could both be proposed as '…critiques of positivism' (Agger 1991:106) and a direct challenge to the dominance of empiricism in the social sciences. In this way, both approaches to ways of thinking and doing research are concerned with the way that power manifests itself and operates. More specifically, I consider that the Foucauldian notion of the link between power relations and the constitution of social science knowledge(s), whose entanglement leads to the hybrid term - power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980) is crucial. Put simply:

> Foucault characterises power/knowledge as an abstract force which will determine what will be known, rather than assuming that individual thinkers develop ideas and knowledge (Mills, 2003:70).

Thus, owing to knowledge being both contextually located and socially and culturally dependent on specific versions of reality, Foucault's notion of discourse is strongly linked to relations of power (Ball, 2013). This has strong implications for what can be known and how control over language impacts on versions of reality that are opened to consciousness, i.e. dominant discourse (Patton, 2015). I identify this as a foundational concept of postmodernist and poststructuralist theories and understanding that characterises my thesis.

Yet, it would be disingenuous not to problematise this combined approach or to take into account Aitchison's (2005) warning about blending and muddying the two terms. Therefore, if it is my intention to be loyal to the tenets of poststructuralism, then I need to pay heed to linguistics, words, and meaning and to consider the inherent power relations within. Additionally, the ways in which we '…construct meaning through language, discourses and institutions, and use them to contextualise and understand the world' (Coakley and Pike, 2014:43) compels me

to be more careful of the subtle differences between terms. Thus, words and terminology do matter for 'Language is a constitutive force, creating a particular view of reality' (Richardson, 1991:174). As a result, words are powerful and yet perversely, 'Most of the time the language we speak is barely visible to us' (Belsey, 2002:6). We tend to think of language as functional or purposeful, but it is much more important than this; our vocabulary has the potential to guide our and others' thoughts and influence meaning.

This preoccupation with meaning has structuralist roots. In his seminal work entitled *Structural Anthropology,* Lévi-Strauss (1968) built upon Saussure's perception that language and society are coterminous (Finlayson and Valentine, 2002) and that Saussure's '…argument that language actively shapes[s] human consciousness' is particularly pertinent (Andrews, 2000:111). As I write this, I turn to my Reflexive Journal:

> As words are important, we must consider their capacity to shape our interpretation of events, people, concepts and relationships. Words themselves are involved in a power relationship with meaning and a poor choice of word can drastically alter the way in which an individual idea is conceived, (re)presented and interpreted. Therefore, as words can alter in terms of their potency, we must be more precise with language (March, 2017).

These reflections become more pressing when viewed in the light of specialist texts on poststructuralism for 'Language sometimes seems to lead a life of its own. Words are unruly, as Belsey, quoting Humpty Dumpty suggests '"They've a temper, some of them"', (2002:4). And yet to try and contain them in a definition or explanation, to fix them forever on a page is in itself a poststructural irony. Indeed, words appearing on a page fulfils a structural function, but any reading can usurp

meaning. Therefore, for poststructuralists such as Derrida[16], every definition eventually deconstructs itself; that it has a tendency to unhitch when one scrutinises its underpinning assumptions and literary gestures (Agger, 1991). Furthermore, the act of fixing meaning to a word denies the diachronic temporal or contextual nature of language for it is in constant flux, continually changing in response to socio-cultural aspects of contemporary society.

Interrogation and evasion of meaning

Consequently, these concepts are in themselves immensely challenging to understand as poststructuralism and postmodernism are often used as umbrella terms to cover a multitude of diverse theories and approaches and appropriated by a range of disciplines (Belsey, 2002; Linstead, 2015; Smart, 1993). This is ideally exemplified by the first words that Rosenau (1992:3) chooses to use in her often cited book, *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences,* as she evocatively claims that 'Postmodernism *haunts* social science today' (emphasis added); an equivocal verb choice that personifies postmodernism's difficulty and challenge to the essence and underpinnings of the social sciences. Furthermore, postmodernism is provoking because it takes a position outside of traditional paradigms to question or deconstruct the assumptions and concepts of qualitative inquiry (Lyotard, 1979; Rosenau, 1992). This is echoed in the following:

> Postmodernism has caused quite a stir in the social sciences. … Frequently misunderstood, reviled or faddishly embraced, postmodernism offers an idiom for characterised lived experiences that challenges, if not subverts [other sociological approaches] (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997:75).

---

[16] Writing in the second half of the twentieth century, Derrida is considered to be leading force in the development of poststructuralism and postmodern philosophy (Agger, 1991; King, 2015). Though he is a fierce critic of linguistics (i.e. Saussure) structuralism (i.e. Lévi-Strauss), he has also been criticised for challenging the foundational beliefs of Western Philosophy (Belsey, 2002). His work is often notoriously difficult to comprehend, but perhaps his best known characteristics of work is deconstruction, *'sous rature'*, *'différance'* and the challenge to structuralism's binary oppositions. This superficial reading is perhaps reflected by the phrase *'il n'y a pas de hors-texte'* translated as 'there is no outside-text' Derrida (1967).

Poststructuralism is no less a loaded term. Not only has it been described as '…a radical break from structuralism', or '…a critique of structuralism from within', but it is seen as '…a bold challenge to Western thought's privileging of the individual subject and its ability to know itself' (Han, 2013:40-43). Taken together, or separately, they are notorious for:

> …the 'posts' announce a radical break with the humanist, modernist, imperialist, represtationalist, objectivist, rationalist, epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions of Western Enlightenment thought and practice (St. Pierre, 2011:615).

Both appear to disrupt, provoke, and question accepted ways of thinking and doing. I am by no means immune from this, for in the writing of this Chapter I have been challenged immensely, not only in researching these slippery and contradictory paradigmatic perspectives and approaches, but in attempting to show how I am employing these in my research. I turn to the following passage in my Reflexive Journal to illustrate my frustration:

> After a week in the library and several long sessions at my computer I feel that I am no closer to creating a coherent account of the seemingly unaccountable. This is just so strange – some of the texts use poststructuralism and postmodernism interchangeably, some sources conflate them, but mostly, they appear to have something different to say – there seems to be no consensus, and written in impenetrable language. After reflecting on this it is clear that this demands a much greater commitment to the cause and I must apply myself more carefully if I've a chance of untangling the complexities and nuances of these provoking concepts. I should start by adding to my glossary of terms that I began at the outset of my research (July, 2018).

The tensions, contradictions, and demands of deciphering these somewhat unforgiving concepts required me to start again, this time with more targeted reading.

The postmodern perspective: accounting for the unaccountable

The following section will attempt to account for the multiple, challenging, contradictory, and contrary interpretations of what is and what is not postmodernism. The issue is important as:

> …postmodernism is of great interest to a wide range of people because it directs our attention to the changes, the major transformations, taking place in contemporary society and culture. The term is at once fashionable and elusive (Sarup, 1993:129).

Many writers (e.g. Featherstone, 2007; Sarup, 1993; Usher and Edwards, 1994) have found it helpful to frame postmodernism in relation to a family of terms such as 'modernity', 'postmodernity', 'modernism', or 'postmodernism'. Modernity can be explained as a distinct phase of time from around the eighteenth century onwards, having its origins in the Enlightenment period and refers to systems of social, economic, and political systems of the West (Featherstone, 2007). Correspondingly, the term 'post' is suggestive of something that occurs after modernity (Featherstone, 2007). And yet, does it refer to its embryonic or actual disintegration of the social forms concomitant with modernity? Is it better framed as a movement toward a post-industrial age and, if so, does it represent a part of the modern, is it poised as a protraction, or a profound break from the modern? According to some writers, postmodernity:

> …emphasises diverse forms of individual and social identity. It is now widely held that the autonomous subject has been dispersed into a range of pleural, polymorphous subject positions inscribed within language (Sarup, 1993:130).

In contrast, modernism is perhaps described as a '…culture of modernity' (Sarup, 1993:130) or differentiated by some as a '…paradigm change in the arts which began at the end of the nineteenth century' (Lash, 1990:123). There is a lack of consensus as to its scope, for Lash (1990) claims that modernism represents an

essential break with the suppositions of modernity, whereas Sarup (1993:131) frames it as:

> …an aesthetic self-consciousness and reflexiveness; a rejection of narrative structure in favour of simultaneity and montage; an exploration of the paradoxical, ambiguous and uncertain, open-ended nature of reality; an in the rejection of an integrated personality in favour or an emphasis upon the Freudian 'split' subject'.

Postmodernism is framed as a culture of postmodernity and its essential aspect '…is that it is the rigorously self-reflexive clinical examination of modernity inspired by the ethos of the Enlightenment probity' (Hollinger, 1994:174-175). The term, which first found use amongst the artists and art critics in 1960s New York, quickly found expression in architecture, economics, and consumerism (Kaplan, 1988; Lather, 1993). Postmodern thought was further galvanised by the publication of Lyotard's seminal work, *The Postmodern Condition,* in 1979 which questioned the production of knowledge and rejected totalising theories such as any universal philosophy. He framed postmodernism as a 'condition' and defined it in concise terms when pressed '…as an incredulity towards metanarratives' (xxiv). As modernism fetishised truth, knowledge, objectivity, and the march of scientific progress, postmodernism boldly:

> …rejects totality in analysing, criticising and transgressing the present. The emphasis is on heterogeneity, plurality, tension, makeshift consensus, transgression and excess (Hollinger, 1994:127).

Thus, Lyotard's legacy was to question the power relationship between scientific knowledge and the legitimising discourse of the modernist period. This was a central concept of another leading intellectual, Michel Foucault, who, amongst other things, examined organisations as systems of power, where state or publicly sanctioned authorities use systems of power to incorporate control, therefore codifying systems of power (Foucault, 1977). In comparison with Foucault, the psychoanalyst Lacan (1977) examined how speech and language constituted the subject and was interested in how as people we are mutable and continually in transition due to language (Campbell, 2018).

Postmodernism bridges across many areas making it a compelling inter-disciplinary approach in academia, but also a cultural critique in intellectual circles (Rosenau, 1992). Lash (1990:ix) applauds it as a '...cultural paradigm which is arguably worthy of serious study'. Furthermore, it also sees expression in the *avant-garde* in the arts, in both high and popular culture, often dissolving the boundaries between them (Jameson, 1988). Similarly, postmodern discourses are a challenge to accepted ways of knowing and doing and have been described as:

> All deconstructive in that they seek to distance us from and make us sceptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language that are often taken for granted and serve as legitimisation for contemporary Western culture (Flax, 1990:41).

Bauman (1992:vii) acknowledges that postmodernism is perhaps '...all these things and many others. But it is also – perhaps more than anything else – *a state of mind*' (emphasis added). For me, this description neatly reimagines the postmodern condition. Similarly, Usher and Edwards (1994:2) echo Bauman's phrase musing that:

> ...perhaps it is best understood as a state of mind, a critical, self-referential posture and style, a different way of seeing and working, rather than a fixed body of ideas, a clearly worked out position, or a set of critical methods and techniques.

Thus, it is my intension to take this postmodernism sensibility and apply it to my research both as an overarching approach and as a methodology that informs my activities in the field. In summary, I hope to align myself with other postmodernists to '...explore the ways in which language, power, social factors and history shape our views about reality, truth and knowledge' (Hollinger, 1994:172).

Boundaries and territories

It is also essential to be critically aware of how poststructuralism influences this research, including my thinking, methodology, and, indeed, my behaviours. Whereas postmodernism is concerned with an analytical interrogation of modernity, '…poststructuralism is concerned with the critical study of power relations inherent in and resulting from the structured order of modernity' (Aitchison, 2005:430). Whilst this has been useful, I have found Agger's differentiation between the two terms more accessible as he writes that '…poststructuralism is a theory of knowledge and language, whereas postmodernism is a theory of society, culture, and history' (1991:112). Equally, I could also look to their location as to where the phenomena were conceived to help distinguish between them. Whereas postmodernism conceivably materialised in response to the conventional forms of high modernism in North America (Sarup, 1993), poststructuralism is framed '…as a French term that represents the European, particularly French *avant-garde* in critical theory' (St. Pierre, 2011:615). Thus, the two terms have different historical genealogies and objects of study.

In addition, Lather has helped me to frame a helpful distinction between the two concepts by defining postmodernism in terms of:

> …chronology, economics (e.g. post-Fordism[17]) and aesthetics, whereas poststructural[ism] is used more often in relation to academic theorising "after structuralism" (Lather, 1993:688).

---

[17] Post-Fordism is the term given to the prevailing system of economic production and consumption since the late twentieth century in most industrialised societies. It is characterised from a move from a Fordist mass-production that had control of the market, to one that has had to be sensitive to altering market conditions (Smart, 1993). It has also been described as a way of life, and indicative of the role of technology and materials that have helped to create a more networked global economy (Amin, 2011).

Furthermore, I return to Aitchison (who becomes clearer to me) offering that the terms are differentiated by the following:

> Thus postmodernism seeks to deconstruct the metanarratives and grand theories of modernist society, whereas poststructuralism seeks to reveal the power relations on which the construction, legitimation, and reproduction of modernist society depends (Aitchison, 2005:430).

Both the distinction in process and purpose of study has caused postmodern approaches to mostly inhabit the humanities, in contrast to poststructural accounts which have infiltrated '…the social sciences in which critical engagement with theories of social, economic, and cultural power is already established' (Aitchison, 2005:430).

Poststructuralist posturing: les enfant terrible du sciences sociales

For me, a light bulb moment came after reading an overview of *Poststructural Feminism in Education*. In it, St. Pierre (2000) contextualises Lather's distinctions and frames poststructuralism '…as a continuation of an ongoing scepticism about humanism and its effects' (507). More helpfully, she explores the origins of poststructuralism:

> During the 1960s the political struggles of those marginalised by dominant discourses emerged within and were produced by critical theories of language, knowledge and the subject as humanism experienced a "legitimisation crisis." (Habermas, 1975). Hutcheon (1993) points out that "there is a long history of many such sceptical sieges to positivism and humanism and todays foot soldiers of theory – Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, Rotty, Baudrillard- follow in the footsteps of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud … in their challenges to the empiricist, rationalist, humanist assumptions of our cultural systems" (St. Pierre, 2000:507).

This personal understanding led me to consume other texts, opening up a new realm of knowing and challenges to my comprehension. An immersion into the origins and operation of poststructuralism followed, but I still found it fraught with

difficulty. For example, some authors propose that poststructuralism inspired by Nietzsche is a '*…philosophical* response to the alleged scientific status of structuralism' (Peters, 1999:2 emphasis original). This is thought-provoking new ground for me and it catalysed further reading on the philosophy of knowledge. Consequently, I read that the ontological and epistemological stances of poststructuralism are drawn from Derrida's interpretation of Nietzsche. This suggests that the main characteristics of the philosopher's work:

> …are a systematic mistrust of metaphysics and a suspicion of the values of 'truth' and 'meaning'. Many cultural relativists believe that, although we may interpret the world differently according to our cultural context, there is a single world which we are all interpreting. For Nietzsche however, there is no single physical reality beyond our interpretations. There are only perspectives (Sarup, 1993:45).

Similarly, structuralism was itself borne out of existentialism and is characterised by '…an attempt to wrestle the "role of the subject in social thought" away from existentialism's unscientific subjectivism' (Andrews 2000:110). In comparison, authors such as Han (2013) emphasise the role of linguistics and intellectual thought in influencing the development of structuralism and, by extension, poststructuralism. Additionally, other writers such as Palmer (2007) and Peters (1999) propose that the prefix post- infers a rejection of structuralism and that poststructuralism represents a replacement for the superseded movement. I read further to find that others suggest that it is not so much a blatant refutation of structuralism, but an ongoing engagement with its concerns and a continuation of its themes (King, 2015; Linstead, 2015; Mease, 2016). Rather than being forced to pick a corner, I align myself with Han, who in true poststructural style, emphasises the term's ambiguity and flexibility by suggesting that 'Poststructuralism was as much a radical break from structuralism as it was a logical outgrowth of it' (Han, 2013:43). Either way, its genealogy is tough going (Andrews, 2000; Han, 2013) and has challenged me both ontologically and epistemologically.

I turn to Peters (1999:1) who suggests that one of poststructuralism's main issues with its forbear was a utilisation of metanarratives that he termed 'mega-paradigms' that was inculcated throughout the social sciences and the humanities in the late 1950s and 1960s. The scientific notion of the social sciences still has echoes in the privileging of quantitative, measurable, and also reductionist, attitudes over qualitative inquiry. This mega-paradigm:

> …was based around the centrality of language and its scientific analysis in human social and cultural life, considered as self-reflexive signifying or semiotic systems or sub-systems. It was, in this sense, part of the broader "linguistic turn" taken by Western philosophy (Peters, 1999:1).

To illustrate further, though it can take either a linguistic or a literary approach:

> In its most exuberant form, it is a philosophy, a *Weltanschauung*, an overall world view that provides an organic as opposed to atomistic account of reality and knowledge (Palmer, 2007:page unknown).

Poststructuralism's point of departure from structuralism was the effective decentring of the structures, a challenge to its scientific standing and a distrust of its foundational metaphysics. It is these onto-epistemological issues that have attracted me to the potential of poststructuralism as a guiding set of theories and approaches that free the researcher from the confines of an exterior social reality in which this reality is independent from consciousness and knowledge is objective. In contrast, poststructuralism simultaneously conserved and extended '…central elements of structuralism's critique of the humanist subject' (Peters, 1999:2). Rather than taking the Enlightenment's view of the bounded, free thinking, autonomous individual with an unchanging true core, I have taken Foucault's (1988) notions of the individual as fractured, irrational, and continually being (re)formed in the power/discourse nexus as a point of departure from postpositivism. Here, the self is a social construction subjected to differing cultural conditions and power relations. In my research, I offer that athletes, coaches, and administrative personnel embody differing aspects of themselves and that these identities are forged and shaped by intersecting notions of gender, role, status,

level of performance, and athletic event. Furthermore, each individual may inhabit many different subjectivities or identities, leading to variations in the way that the coach-athlete relationship(s) plays out.

In this sense poststructuralism is also a critique of the:

> …interpretivism paradigm and its understanding of subjectivity posed by the free and self-determining individual to argue for social construction of meaning making (an understanding of a 'self' as produced in language) (Markula and Silk, 2011:51).

I have taken Markula and Silk's interpretation of poststructuralist theories and applied them to my approach in which I try to consider how language, power, and knowledge intersect to produce discourses and meaning. Undoubtedly, one of the benefits of adopting a poststructural stance is how we use language to think differently and to open up new ways of engaging in qualitative research. This particular approach is exemplified by the following:

> Poststructuralism is difficult to the extent that its practitioners use old words in unfamiliar ways, or coin terms to say what cannot be said otherwise. This new vocabulary still elicits some resistance, but the issue we confront is how far should we let the existing language impose limits on what is possible to think (Belsey, 2002:5).

I take solace in Lacan's advice in that '…to read does not obligate one to understand. First it is necessary to read … [and to] avoid understanding too quickly' (cited in St. Pierre, 2011:614). I turn to my Reflexive Journal:

> Possibly if one thinks they understand quickly, they then do not interrogate the text or its meaning too deeply afterwards. Perhaps they are left with a superficial understanding that does not lend itself to alternative ways of knowing, or to cut oneself off from alternative possibilities: denying its potential (March, 2019).

Consequently, poststructuralism also raises questions about meaning, for it challenges traditional theories of language and culture and what it means to be a human being. As I write this, my mind turns to the very steep and ongoing learning curve that the challenge of siting my work within a new discipline and underlying

paradigm required. Not only was I exposed to a new terminology and specific syntax of sociology, the way in which those words were deployed had implications beyond the text; they challenged me to think differently. This was often uncomfortable and disconcerting. I found that 'truths' I held about phenomena, people and processes did not stand up to the gaze that a demanding and disruptive aspect of critical theory necessitated. To help with this difficult aspect of learning I had to accept that there are conflicting and multifaceted truths, to challenge my absolute assertions and to become more fluid, flexible and progressive in my thinking.

The more I read and write about poststructuralism the more I feel conformable with my interpretation of its core tenets:

> Poststructuralism links language, subjectivity, social organisation and power. The centrepiece is language. Language does not reflect social reality, but produces meaning, creates social reality. ...understanding language as competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning and organising the world makes language a site of exploration and struggle (Richardson, 2000a:928).

To this end, I look to the transitional French critic Roland Barthes who in one of his most recognisable works, *The Death of the Author* (1977), discusses the structuralist understanding of language being socially constructed. The real source of the text is language itself and not the writer. By releasing the text from the author, 'Barthes, helped draw attention to the possibility of multiple and competing interpretations of the signifiers that comprise a text' (King, 2015:96). This key poststructural principle must have stuck a chord, for in annotating King's article I have noted:

> This ontological freedom opens up multiple realities and fractured worlds; what this means today may not mean the same when read tomorrow. Surely this frees the notion of the author as being final, all-knowing and a genius, but instead opens a dialogue between the reader, text and author?

For King (2015), the main characteristics of poststructural work are interconnected and reinforce each other. Sarup (1993) provides a useful summary: first, as described above, the relationship with truth, knowledge, and the text is disrupted. Instead, poststructuralism invites the reader to interact with the text, co-producing meaning that is temporal and contextual. Second, and related to the first, is poststructuralism's critique of the totality of the stable and unchanging sign (the Saussurean[18] position). There is a move towards a swing for the signified to the signifier and, in doing so, there is an everlasting diversion on the way to any absolute truth. Third, poststructuralism creates a robust refutation of the Cartesian notion of the complete subject, where language structures consciousness and that knowledge is separate from society. This ties into the fourth distinguishing feature of poststructuralism, whereby there is a deep distrust of metaphysics. Here, the subject/author is not invested with an initiating consciousness that is the ultimate authority for truth, but identity, causality, meaning, and the subject are all exposed to poststructural critique. This is useful, but the central notion of the operation of power that runs throughout so many poststructural texts is absent (Aitchison, 2005; Ball, 2013; Foucault, 1977; Foucault, 1980). It may be inherently implied, but not made explicit in this instance.

---

[18] The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is often credited as a founding father of structuralism in which he developed '…a universal theory of how meanings are created through language structures' (Markula and Silk, 2011). He proposed that language purposefully moulded human consciousness as opposed to dutifully mirroring reality, which in turn influenced the perception and experience of real and imaginary worlds (Andrews, 2000). The Saussurean outlook mentioned here focuses on the processes by which meaning is embodied in language and fixed forever. Furthermore, it is encapsulated by the relationship between the two elements of the sign - between the signifier (the observable image, symbol or word of the sign) and the signified (the notion or mental picture associated with the sign) (Andrews, 2000). Poststructuralism challenges this view that meaning is forever fixed, as words are in constant flux with meaning and marked by the process of perpetual difference. These critiques were first articulated by Derrida (1967; 2004) and locates the processes of power that serve to allow some meanings to emerge and become dominant at a particular time and place. Language is therefore temporal and situational.

In wrestling with a Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralist perspective on power, I have found that it manifests itself as both subject and object in its aims. This has been useful, for in taking such an approach I adopt Foucault's rejection of the humanist binary notion of power as possessive, repressive, and negative (St. Pierre, 2000). It has taken time for me to appreciate Foucault's (1978; 1980) interpretations of power as not belonging to an individual, but rather operating in relations, immanent, and in flux. To reject the traditional notions of power as being centralised is liberating and, I argue, has potent implications for my research as a theatrical framework. As opposed to being concentrated in one place, Foucault emphasises power's diffuse nature and:

> The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invisible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere (Foucault, 1978:93).

In addition, previous dualistic interpretivist readings of power as hierarchical and possessed by a dominant ruling class over the subordinate masses (Avner et al., 2014) are vetoed in the sense of their negative connotations. To elaborate, rather than power controlling or repressing a class of people (or in the case of the coach-athlete relationship(s), the supposed 'powerless' athlete), power may have subtler or more productive undertones. In doing so, I reject the Marxist or Webarian view of power and take the position that 'In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1977:194). Additionally, power and reality are involved in a complex dynamic which produces truth, knowledge, or discourse. Foucault (1980) continues to explain further:

> The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power. … Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (p. 131).

By engaging with elements of Foucauldian thought and poststructural notions of the role of language, knowledge, and the subject, I will combine them with a postmodern sensibility that rejects totalising theories and includes numerous perspectives and polyvocality that is culturally, temporally, and contextually located. Specifically, I will be examining the power relations that not only operate between athlete and coach, but also how that relationship is situated in the wider social context where broader notions of power intersect across discourses, institutions, politics, and people. By moving from the personal to the political, I hope to illuminate the invisible operation of power, not only in my reading of the data, but in acknowledging the power dynamics inherent in the complex process of doing qualitative research.

Interrogating the interview: the favourite child of sports coaching research

Foreword

A common thread occurring in much qualitative research is the interview. Indeed, in terms of collecting and constructing data, it is the most widespread approach used in sports coaching research (Jachyra et al., 2014). In this sense, I am no different in choosing to engage with this potent, performative social encounter, yet by imbuing the approach and process with postmodern sensibilities, I hope to be mindful of aspects of power, language, and meaning. It is a far from simple activity, as Schostak (2006:1) warns us:

> Don't be misled. The interview is not a simple tool with which to mine information. It is a place where views may clash, deceive, seduce, enchant. It is the inter-view. It is as much about seeing a world – mine, yours, ours, theirs – as about hearing accounts, opinions, arguments, reasons, declarations: words with views into different worlds.

In this section I seek to provide an overview of the interview, its place within qualitative research and the value that it may bring to this work in particular. In doing so, I hope to achieve three things. First, to demonstrate the slippery nature of the interview encounter, its temporal, fleeting quality and its nuanced,

multilayers of meaning imbued with politics and power. Second, to consider issues of truth, interpretation, experience, sense-making, perception, representation, and analysis. Finally, to position the interview not only as a methodological approach, but from an epistemological and ontological perspective that is firmly wedded to postmodern sensibilities and poststructural notions of language, power, and knowledge. The interview, as Schostak's words demonstrate, is far from an innocent undertaking. It is a potent encounter, or a '…contested field of action' (Schostak, 2006:51). Smith and Sparkes (2016c) corroborate this approach in the following paired quote. Here, they urge the researcher not to view the interview as a neutral tool, but as a socially situated event which:

> …invites the participant(s) to tell stories, accounts, reports, and/or descriptions about their perspectives, insights, experiences, feelings, emotions and/or behaviours in relation to their research questions.

> An interview is a social activity where two or more persons engage in an embodied task, jointly constructing knowledge about themselves, and the social world as they interact with each other over time, in a certain place, and through a range of senses (Smith and Sparkes, 2016c:103).

Positioning the qualitative interview

Considering both Schostak's (2006) and Smith and Sparkes's (2016c) concerns about the interview as an interactive encounter involving elements such as contestation, cooperation and persuasion, leads me to reflect on Alvesson's (2002) position of the interview as a negotiated practice. Rather than mining for information, data can be generated and co-produced by active parties. Subsequently, taking these positions has been helpful in moving towards viewing data as '…ambiguous illustrations' in which language and syntax construct a distinct social reality as opposed to being discovered (Alvesson, 2002:123). In contrast, not all texts on interviewing have been as valuable due to their postpositivist leanings,

revealing shortcomings in their understanding of the interview method. For example, an interview is not just a way to '…allow for an in-depth examination of an individual's attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values with respect to a particular phenomenon' (Purdy, 2014:162). For how do we really know what people are thinking or what their beliefs are? We cannot be sure. Reading Purdy's chapter on interviewing, I have reflected in the margin:

> …yet this perspective is deeply problematic as people can evade, occlude, or obfuscate. How do we know if they are telling the truth? What is their agenda? What of the socially desirable response that the interviewee may provide in accordance with social norms?

Rather than suggest that the interview permits direct entry to an individual's private realm of understanding, the interview may be conducted at the intersection between memory and experience. Examining this from a sociological perceptive can be valuable, but '…only if one accepts that memory and experience are social actions in themselves. Both are enacted' (Atkinson, 2015:97). Moreover, in reflecting on my critique of Purdy's chapter, my DoS challenges me to go further. Surely both the interviewee and interviewer play the game? Both have potential to enchant, obfuscate, dissemble or disarm, so how does the interviewee know if I (the interviewer) is genuine? In considering the interview as a whole, I am more convinced by Alvesson's assertion that we should not just see interviews as a neutral technique or that '…the outcome of the skilful use of it is treated as a pipeline to the interiors of interviewees or the exteriors of social reality' (2002:1250).

Furthermore, on a deeper level, interviews may be represented as onto-epistemologically problematic (Giardina, 2016) as they are rooted in humanist approaches that privilege the participant as an '…essentialist, intentional free subject' (Mazzei, 2013:733). Postmodernist sensibilities are sceptical towards viewing individuals as rational, free thinking, autonomous directors of their agency (Alvesson, 2002). Consequently, I began to research postmodern interviewing knowledge creation and representation as collaborative co-constructions of a

particular fragmentary reality, in which a double subjectivity is created (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003a). Here, '…each participant's attitudes, feelings and thoughts affect and are affected by the emerging reciprocity between the participants' (Ellis and Berger, 2003:159). Thus, in approaching interviews, I adopt Foucault's view that '…truth is only a localised version of reality and that power relations and meaning are the function of language and discourse' (Wiggins and Mason, 2005:48).

The scope and value of the (postmodern) interview

Qualitative research in the social sciences is increasingly being viewed as an intimate, complex, and layered interaction between investigators and research respondents in both general qualitative texts (e.g. Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2014; Patton, 2015; Silverman, 2016) and in specific qualitative texts for physical culture, sports studies, sports coaching or sport and exercise science (e.g. Andrews et al., 2005; Markula and Silk, 2011; Nelson et al., 2014b; Smith and Sparkes, 2016a). Moreover, increasing attention to the process and politics of interviewing as both a method and as an epistemological concern (Huberman and Miles, 2002; Marvasti, 2004; Rubin and Rubin, 2005) have found further expression in postmodern or poststructuralist approaches to interviewing (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003b; Roulston, 2010a). Indeed, prior to the early twenty-first century postmodernism:

> …is not very informative about specific practices for data generation: it doesn't provide much guidance for what to do in the field (Alvesson, 2002:71).

A particular critique of interviewing from a postmodern position is that it was swift to criticise other paradigms and approaches, but reluctant to offer alternative guidelines or a pragmatic approach to the craft of postmodern interviewing. I found this lack of guidance perplexing, so I was glad to read Alvesson's critique as it

gave voice to my frustration. To exemplify, I offer the following passage from my Reflexive Journal:

> As I move into the field and start to engage in the early interviews, I feel a disquiet. How am I to be postmodern if the only things I am reading are postmodern critiques of the interview? The best I can do at this stage is to take inspiration from Roulston (2010a) who suggests that the interviewer brings themselves into the field as a mixture of composite selves to interact with the interviewee in order to create readings which may be partial, fragmentary and situated. Try to get away from the notion of creating representations of findings that are '…unified, final and holistic' (220). So is it more of an approach or attitude, than a particular blueprint for doing? (January, 2018).

It was some time before I came across Scheurich (1997) who was one of the few social scientists who has offered guidelines or a pragmatic approach to the craft of postmodern interviewing prior to the turn of the twenty-first century. I was intrigued with his rejection of the notion of the interview and interviewee working together cooperatively to produce a shared and common meaning. This was significant, for I read texts about mutual interests and responsive interviewing styles in which both protagonists are working proactively together towards a common goal (Flick, 2014; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Conversely, Scheurich argues that the interview has no *telos* in terms of a '…joint construction of meaning' challenging the idea that the interview is purely a knowledge-producing phenomena (1997:66). Instead, both parties have '…multiple intentions and desires, some of which are consciously known and some of which are not' (Scheurich, 1997:62). By way of illustration, I draw upon the following passage reflecting on my interview with Toni, an elite UK coach:

> In trying to follow him and give meaning to his words I had to concentrate fully. Yet I could not guarantee how my interview persona, strategies or motives were perceived in return, or how successful the interview actually was. He was verbose, seemingly very open and passionate, yet at times I felt like the one who was being interviewed. At the very least it was intense; I felt that I was being assessed and I did not want to disclose too much of myself or my intentions (Researcher Fieldnote Journal, July, 2018).

Subsequently, if like Schostak (2006) I consider the interview not to be a tool, but an event, then both parties will act and respond in ways that involve a degree of

exposure to (mis)judgement and (mis)understanding. Thus, both the interviewer and interviewee '…will be subject to projections and introjections of ideas and feelings coming from the other person' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000:45). I consider that this recognition of feelings and complexity of research is in line with postmodern tendencies.

Additionally, a central postmodern concern with interviewing is power. Together, these authors and others (Markula and Silk, 2011; Smith and Sparkes, 2016c) have emphasised the inherent asymmetries of power that subsume the entire interview process, not only in its dynamic form as a social encounter, but from conception, creation, transcription, evaluation, (re)presentation, interpretation, and dissemination. The point I wish to make here, is not to support a move to eradicate power from research interviews; this is in itself a futile task, for I join with Touraine who posits that, 'All social relations are relations of power' (1981:33). Rather, researchers should be reflecting on the role of power in the creation of interview knowledge, for:

> Acknowledging the power relations in qualitative research interviews raises both epistemological issues about the implications for the knowledge produced and ethical issues about the implications about how to deal responsibly with power asymmetries (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:18).

Moreover, the role of the researcher is transformed from a disembodied, neutral, autocratic interrogator into a dynamic, active, empathic provocateur involved in the co-construction of meaning and an influential co-conspirator (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; St. Pierre, 2011). Qualitative researchers operating with postmodern sensibilities may have diverse purposes and interests, but there is no false modesty about their own agency and influence; instead of suppressing their role, voice and authority they own that:

> Reflexivity, poetics and power are the watchwords as the interview process is refracted through the lenses of language, knowledge, culture and difference (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003a:3).

I join with Roulston (2010a) who suggests that being cognisant of other postmodern concerns in conducting the interview, such as notions of subjectivity, multiple selves, polyvocality, and incompleteness, may increase the value of this approach. This has implications for the (re)presentation of data and in providing potential readings, disrupting conventional interpretations and encouraging us to think differently. For:

> Rather than achieving comprehensive descriptions of the phenomena under investigation, researchers attempt to open up new spaces for thinking, being, and doing (Roulston, 2010a).

Being aware of the hidden nature and subtle complexities of these highly contextual, temporal, *in situ* encounters have led researchers such as Gubrium and Holstein (2003b) to espouse the increasingly active role that respondents themselves have in this rich, multi-textured, charged interchange of views. Thus, the interview is increasingly being viewed as a global cultural site for the generation of meaning and that it is being re-cast '…as an occasion for purposefully animated participants to construct versions of reality *interactionally* rather than merely purvey data' (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003c:32 emphasis original). The deceptively simple view of the interview '…as a conversation with a structure and purpose' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:5) opens into the collaborative and co-constructive aspect of the interview, where it is reframed as '… a concerted interactional project', and interview respondents are portrayed '…as virtual *practitioners* of everyday life' (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003c:32 emphasis original).

Overall, I have been challenged by my initial assumptions about the 'straightforwardness' of conducting interviews and I align myself with Alvesson who proposes that there is so much more than seeing it purely in terms of a tool to gain access '…to the interiors of interviewees or the exteriors of social reality' (2002:125). As a result, I join with Fontana and Frey (2000) in developing my understanding of the interview as a multi-layered and intricate social phenomenon.

Equally, my thoughts have been shaped by their view that '…we cannot lift the results of interviewing out of the contexts in which they were gathered and claim them as objective data with no strings attached' (Fontana and Frey, 2000:663). Consequently, with further reading and practice in the field I became increasingly open towards postmodern interviewing being framed '…as more of a set of orientating sensibilities … than is a particular kind of interviewing' (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003a:4).

This has been a testing Chapter to write and one that is ambitious in its scope and claims. Not only is the content challenging, but I have been mindful of how I have tried to use both postmodern and poststructural concerns and approaches to navigate my venture in to qualitative social science research. In summary, I have chosen to locate my research on the coach-athlete relationship(s) within the poststructural paradigm as I consider this to offer the greatest scope in exploring the operation of power in the elite athletics in the UK (Markula and Silk, 2011). Furthermore, by using an array of poststructural theories, I am using power as an operational framework from which to illuminate the social context in which intersecting micro and macro social forces interact (Westwood, 2002). Equally, by aligning myself with postmodern tendencies that reject universal metanarratives, I hope to emphasise plurality, heterogeneity, and the creation of knowledge that is partial, fragmented, and subjective with an internal ontology (Hollinger 1994). In doing so, I reflect on postmodernism as Bauman's (1992:vii) '…state of mind', but also as a method – as series of guiding principles such as reflexivity, researcher position, and ethical concerns that guide the research (Rail, 2002; St Pierre, 2011). Consequently, my use of postmodern approaches to interviewing have created a sensitising lens that problematises the activity, instead re-framing it as a powerful social encounter with implications for meaning and representation of data. Throughout, I have presented this Chapter as a combination of methodology and methods as Alvesson and Sköldberg (2018) cautions us that artificially separating out these issues would be incongruous to a poststructural and postmodern

approach. I now turn to the second part of my methodology and methods section that traces my activities in the field and explores my concerns in conducting social science research.

CHAPTER VI - ADOPTING A POSTSTRUCTURAL AND POSTMODERN METHODOLOGY AND METHOD (PART 2)

Introduction

This section explores the methods and procedures undertaken in the study with an emphasis on the practical and political elements of qualitative research. I doing so, I hope to achieve a number of objectives. First, is to describe with as much clarity as I can, the engagement I undertook in the field, interviewing and talking to the coaches, athletes, and coach managers. Second, is to discuss the problematic nature of interviewing and to shed light on the way I attempt to manage the evident contradictions and, lastly, to explore the associated literature which examines the role of the researcher within the interview environment and how we may mediate the social, political, and personal constructs in which they take place. Embracing all three aims is a conscious intention to employ a poststructural, Foucauldian inspired approach to power as imbuing all aspects of the research process and in the exploration of the coach-athlete relationship itself. I also hope to show that this theoretical framework works in concert with postmodernism by using it as a guiding set of principles that govern the whole research process.

Purpose and pilot work

Prior to commencing my main fieldwork and data generation, I conducted a series of eight pilot interviews over a 12-month period from November 2016. My aims were threefold: to consciously develop an appropriate interview guide, to evolve and craft the skills of a practiced interviewer, and to reflect and consider the process of data generation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Markula and Silk, 2011). As a neophyte social science researcher, engaging in pilot work helped with developing the procedural and technical skills of doing research. Furthermore, these experiences allowed me to identify inconsistences in my practice and to

apply lessons, where learned, to the main study (Jariath et al., 2000; Kim, 2011). In addressing these concerns, I hope to be more open in my practice. It is interesting to note that detailed reports of pilot studies are uncommon in research literature (van Teijlingen et al., 2001) for they are often '…underdiscussed, underused and underreported' (Prescott and Soeken, 1989:60). I argue that this may reduce the methodological rigour and value of the main study. Perhaps as Sampson (2004) contends, this aversion to including pilots in qualitative work is a vestige of a positivist approach, assuming that they are used to test research instruments and have been viewed as having limited value in themselves. By way of contrast, I hope to offer a thoughtful, reflexive, and critical tone that endorses the value and credibility of preliminary work.

Consequently, the next sections unpack the foundational pilot practices and purposes of preparing for the main study (Kim, 2011). In the adoption of the interview, I reiterate that they are not impartial instruments for data gathering, '…but active interactions between two or more people leading to negotiated, contextually based results' (Fontana and Frey, 2000:646). Therefore, in keeping with Roulston's (2010a) position, I hope to consider issues of voice, quality, representation, fragmented selves, researcher influence, reflexivity, and notions of the active, emerging interview. This, along with my postmodern sensibilities and belief in fractured, incomplete, partial histories, and knowledges (St. Pierre, 2011) challenges me to become more mindful of my practices and my effect on others. Conducting purposeful pilot work has been immensely valuable, allowing me to experiment with interview interaction, trialling diverse modes of questioning and thinking differently about how the data could be interpreted (Markula and Silk, 2011). Nonetheless, this is no tick-box exercise to be viewed solely as a useful array of techniques to be deployed in the field, but a nuanced and subtle craft that I

should practice, learn, and continually reflect on (Smith and Sparkes, 2016c). In an attempt to meet this aim, I quote from my Reflexive Journal:

> The last interview with my para-cyclist went particularly well and I felt quite proud of the way that I set the scene, initiated the questions and responded to her [the athlete's] answers by including deeper, follow up questions that elicited quite thoughtful, considered replies. It was as if I was almost watching myself navigate the interview process, forever mindful of the many routes or avenues we could take as we explored the terrain (November, 2017).

This last interview resonated with Gubrium and Hostein's (2003c) presentation of the interview as a site for meaning to be negotiated by active subjects. This also evokes Pool's (1957:193) perception of the interview as an '…interpersonal drama with a developing plot'. By allowing the respondent opportunities to tell their own stories and choose which experiences or perceptions to relate echoes with a more thoughtful approach that reflects:

> …an increasingly pervasive application for the constitutive character of social interaction and of the constructive role played by active subjects in authoring their own experiences (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003c:32).

Nevertheless, this exercise has not been without its difficulties, and at times has been frustrating, highlighting inconsistences with my approach. In particular, there is a significant difference between appreciating the theoretical assumptions underpinning reflexive interviewing and applying them. For example, in my early interview stage, I could discuss the philosophical foundations of seeing the interview as a collaborative, emerging engagement, but perversely, continued to view the interview as a tool to get to the truth, to draw the respondent out to uncover their (hidden) perspectives or agenda. Indeed, this juxtaposition of ideas was careless and took a while to unlearn, gradually being reformed into a position where I am more questioning and less certain of my interviewee's position. Indeed, the habits of postpositivism have been hard to break and the following passage

from my Reflexive Journal reflects my difficulties:

> Though I have studied several key texts (Markula and Silk, 2011; Nelson et al., 2014b), I am still feeling underprepared with regard to constructing and running interviews. The first three interviews were great for trying out tactics and approaches, but I felt that I was getting to the 'real stuff' towards the end. Nevertheless, the beginning of the interview is essential for allowing space and time to get going. We are asking quite a lot of our interviewees – to reveal inner thoughts and to challenge assumptions which may lay bare inherent contradictions and complexities of their characters, beliefs and practices in sports coaching (December, 2016).

It has been a lesson in allowing both myself and my active respondents to occupy multiple, subjective, and conflicting positions simultaneously, where meaning may be constantly constructed, negotiated, and contextually located (Alvesson, 2002; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

Pilot participants

I selected four coaches (three from athletics and one from football) and four athletes (one each from football, boxing, athletics, and para-cycling) to take part in my preliminary study. My pool consisted of one female and three male coaches and two female and two male athletes. Ethnicity was mostly homogenous with the majority of participants being white British, with one who self-identified as British Asian and a second as British mixed race. I used my personal and professional connections to approach and recruit these individuals. In this way, they were all purposefully sampled as representatives of the participants I wished to interview in the main study (Patton, 2015). This is significant as all of the coaches have either coached high-performance athletes, held National Event Coach positions or have run National Standard Coaching Programmes. In this, I was guided by Patton (2015:264) who suggests that purposeful sampling involves '…selecting information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated'.

All athletes were part of MMU's Sport Scholarship Programme and have represented the University in their chosen sports, competing at national or international level. Though not all of the athletes were involved in athletics *per se,* they were approached because they were similar to the demographic to my selected study cohort (Berg, 2001).

Pilot procedure

Six out of the eight preliminary interviews were conducted *vis-à-vis* and the last two via Skype video call. All participants were provided with a copy of the Information Sheet for Participants (ISP) and there were opportunities for questions and answers before the interview began. Each participant authorised their voluntary participation by completing the Informed Consent Form (ICF) which was then stored in accordance to MMU's Ethics Procedure. Whilst providing an audit trail can be important in maintaining methodological transparency (Smith et al., 2014), it can quickly descend into a sterile, meaningless enterprise if ethical issues are presented as purely being met by adopting a comprehensive procedural ethical chain approach (Barbour, 2001; Palmer, 2016). Consideration of the wider, ongoing and fluid ethical issues that emerge throughout the research process should engage the ethically minded researcher, and not just be relegated to a tick box activity prior to beginning a research endeavour (Tracy, 2013). To this end, I will endeavour to consider issues of voice and representation together with being mindful of the politics of social interaction, requiring a respectful sensitivity when engaging in interviews (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Schostak, 2006). Indeed, this disposition towards emerging research ethics can be articulated by continually asking: 'How should I be towards these people I am studying?' (Markula and Silk, 2011:76).

The development of the interview questions began with the pilot exercise going through several development processes and versions. After progressing through an intense refinement and redevelopment exercise, they eventually informed the basis of the main interview guide (Patton, 2015). At first, during the pilot, I drafted questions that I believed would elicit interesting and insightful responses and was disappointed to find that they were far too numerous and broad to successfully implement and manage. I found the process painful and frustrating and was dissatisfied with my efforts. Consequently, I believe I needed a more thorough understanding of the nuances of progressive qualitative research design and a significantly greater appreciation of what a postmodern interview looked and, more importantly, felt like. I note in my Reflexive Journal:

> After my second pilot interview, I got though a massive forty-seven questions from my bank of almost a hundred questions. Despite the value I got out of practicing my emergent interview style, this is far too many. My DoS suggests a radical reduction to fifteen questions! Utterly dismayed. Where to start? How will I accomplish this? (December 2016).

One of guiding structures for doing research is how does it address the research questions posed? Thus, I needed to go back to the beginning and consider how my interview questions would help me answer my original research aims (Markula and Silk, 2011). Did they actually contribute to my study? Furthermore, this marked the start of a long iterative process with my research team, where I conducted extensive research into qualitative research itself, specifically interview design and engendering a closer appreciation of my research paradigm (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003b; Roulston, 2010a; 2010b; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Smith and Sparkes, 2016c). Undoubtedly, I found this stage to be immensely demanding and, at times, perplexing when I was challenged both in my beliefs and my researcher practice. It is here that I particularly felt the isolating effects of postgraduate research and, at times, felt totally lost.

An epiphany came after reading Andrews et al. (2005) *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies.* Specifically, referring to the craft of interviews, I took Amis's (2005) suggestion of constructing an interview guide around identified theoretical themes as a valid starting point for informing specific interview questions. These roughly correlated to devising questions that would help me provide a reading of the three explicit aims inherent in my study. First, I focused on power dynamics that operate to define, challenge, and redefine the coach-athlete relationship(s). Second, I sought to locate the coach-athlete relationship(s) within the culture of high-performance sport, through which it seeks to understand how coaches, athletes, and others negotiate power relations. Third, I examined internal and external pressures on the wider coach-athlete relationship(s) by exploring power as exercised by GB systems, funding agents, and other stakeholders. This refining and redrafting process took a considerable amount of time and energy and took various forms before it was rolled out for the main study. Even then, I felt obligated to return to the guide, tweaking and rewriting as I leaned and developed my craft.

After the preliminary introductions and housekeeping issues were complete, we began the interview. Audio was recorded on two electronic devices simultaneously (iPhone and iPad) which were then transferred as coded and encrypted files to my password-protected MMU PC. In order to practice my developing craft, I drew upon my two decades of working in education and recent qualitative research to help formulate a potential interviewing persona to create a conducive, encouraging atmosphere. Reflecting on these early experiences, I argue that my approach was reminiscent of Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interviewing style in adopting a helpful attitude dependent upon empathy and understanding. At this point:

> Responsive interviewing is a style of qualitative interviewing. It emphasises the importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and the interviewee that leads to more give and take in the conversation. The tone of questioning is friendly and gentle, with little confrontation. The pattern of questioning is flexible; questions evolve in response to what the interviewees have just said, and new questions are designed to tap the experience and knowledge of each interviewee (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:37).

Writing this provokes me to recall my early interview experiences which allowed me to practice my fledgling interview and communication skills. I have mused that as interviews are a form of disclosure:

> Hopefully I've learnt to 1) Give the interviewee more time to speak, think and respond to my questions. 2) But also to try to develop a rapport and to generate conditions that are conducive to an interviewee feeling comfortable enough to divulge personal information. 3) Use an interviewee's words or examples to help develop empathy and understanding. 4) Refer back to an example to ask deeper questions. 5) Be prepared to go off script [both them and me] and ask second, third order questions to build up depth and richness of data etc. (Reflexive Journal, January, 2017).

During this time, I became increasingly aware of the politics of language and paid closer attention to the way I framed questions. Yet this was not without its challenges, for rather than just asking questions and getting the desired response whatever that was:

> ...the spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and how carefully we report or code the answers (Fontana and Frey, 2000:645).

This is substantiated by Scheurich (1997:62) who describes interviewing and language as '...persistently slippery, unstable and ambiguous from person to person, from situation to situation, from time to time'. If we take on board Schostak's musing that '...language is never innocent' (2006:69), then language has meaning beyond the spoken or written word. Put differently, language and words have a fluid history and political connections which may be deciphered in various ways by active participants in the verbal exchange. Words are indeed powerful. Consequently, after refining my bank of questions for the athletes, I was hopeful that it might elicit salacious and rich responses that would give me a greater affinity to their experiences and help me answer my research questions.

Unfortunately, I was not entirely successful, as my Reflexive Journal suggests:

> Apart from one athlete, most of the responses were fairly straightforward, one-dimensional or perfunctory. Though on the surface, I enjoyed the experience, I had to constantly drive the process and encourage the interaction which emphasised (to me most certainly) the asymmetries of power inherent within the interview situation. I had to ask what did this experience actually give me? Was I skilled enough to build the kind of relationship that would elicit responses that I could use towards a construction of data? (November 2017).

The pilot study gave me the time and space to increase my experience of planning, conducting, and reflecting upon the theoretical underpinnings, politics, and processes of engaging with interviews in a postmodern vein. In terms of my original aims, I believe that I successfully evolved and crafted some of the skills of a practiced interviewer and that I had begun to reflect and consider the process of data creation from a more reflexive standpoint. Despite these advances, the development of the interview guide was much more laborious and was not fully realised until part way through the main study interview sequence. Nevertheless, without being able to go through this valuable phase of experiential learning I may not have been so successful with the main phase of my data crafting.

Main study section

Inclusion criteria for participants

Providing a rationale for my inclusion criteria is necessary and follows the purposeful sampling technique of selecting potential participants (Patton, 2005; Suri, 2011). This is a non-randomised technique which adds rigour and credibility to the study contributing to its academic worth (Finlay, 2006). Here individuals are specifically targeted based on their potential value to the study; in other words, chosen '…to permit inquiry into and understanding of the phenomenon in depth' (Patton, 2015:52). Nonetheless, a bewildering array of purposeful sampling strategies are available to the researcher and although this research initially used a sub-category of purposeful sampling known as expert sampling, other strategies were used in tandem (O'Hagan et al., 2006). Furthermore, regardless of the typology of sampling techniques, Coyne (1997) suggests that selecting a suitable informant who is lucid, reflexive, and communicative is essential to the basis of the study, contributing to its width and its insightfulness (Lieblich et al., 1998).

To this end, my inclusion criteria included those UK athletes and coaches who are considered to be 'high-performance' or 'elite'. In addition, I also included a rationale for selecting specific stakeholders within athletics such as performance managers, sport science support, or members of aligned sports bodies foregrounded in Chapter I.

Participants

Methodological transparency is an acknowledged indicator of quality in most forms of research. Spencer et al. (2003) prompts me to include information about how sample size was decided (Meyrick, 2006). I recruited and interviewed a total of 30 participants over a period of 14 months from October 2017. Originally, discussions with my DoS suggested a target sample size of 35 participants, or until new interviews led to a saturation of data where little new knowledge was generated

(Kvale, 2008). Estimating sample size in qualitative research is difficult due to the unfolding nature of the research, therefore, a flexible approach to sample size is often warranted (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, as opposed to using large and representative sampling, qualitative research is purposive, meaning that a smaller cohort can be chosen based on the underlying theoretical purposes of the research and not just methodological principles (Maravasti, 2004). The number of participants chosen needs to be sufficient to engender a range of experiences and standpoints that will help me explore my research questions (Mason, 2010). More participants, however, do not lead to a greater validity of findings, nor does it add to the credibility of the research (Smith and Sparkes, 2016a). Others echo this view suggesting:

> A social scientist cannot get close to the lives of 50 or 100 or so people in an interview study. … The aim is *not* statistical representativeness … but instead the chance to look in detail at how *selected* people *experience* the world (Brinkmann, 2013:59, emphasis added).

Moreover, it is the depth or quality of the responses that is the overriding factor here and not necessarily the breadth or number of respondents interviewed (Morse et al., 2002). On reflection, though it is common to use the notion of data saturation to call a halt to interviewing (Kvale, 2008), I now find this problematic and arrogant to assume that no new insights or themes can be drawn (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Instead, I stopped recruiting participants for practical and professional reasons when I had achieved 30 interviews. Restriction of time, money, travel played a part, but it was my professional judgment that I had enough quality material to help me address my research aims that competed my engagement in the field. In summary, it is not necessarily about numbers *per se*, but about richness and quality.

Of the 30 individuals actually interviewed, 12 were athletes, 11 were coaches and there were seven stakeholders. Two important issues emerged from this activity; first, it is hard to acquire access to this select cohort, additionally, they are far fewer in number compared to participation athletes or coaches and they have a very wide geographical distribution. Practically, this meant a considerable outlay in

time, energy and expense in travelling to interview destinations. Second, the neat classifications I have chosen do not sit well with poststructural notions of categorisation. Thus, if I take the position of the self as being made up of partial, numerous facets that do not make up a single unitary subject, then I need to consider that the self can inhabit multiple subject and subjective positions, rejecting the notion of identity as a neat circle (Schostak, 2006). Put differently, the majority of the coaches interviewed had prior experiences as athletes and six out of the seven stakeholders either had been athletes and coaches, or had dual roles in which they balance coaching activities alongside managerial positions within allied sports GBs.

All the athletes selected came from a variety of disciplines within athletics, with one jumps specialist, one hammer thrower, two hurdlers (sprint and 400m), two 400m runners, two sprinters, one middle distance runner, one middle and long distance runner, one steeplechaser, and one road and cross-country runner. At this point, however, I offer a caveat: I do not claim generalisation despite a variety of events being represented in this thesis. Athletics is a multi-disciplined array of disparate events, each having a very different ethos, objective and, ultimately, singular coach-athlete relationship(s). In terms of the 12 athletes here, and at the time of writing, nine are currently representing GBR and three have recently retired. They all satisfy the requirements for being high-performance athletes, with five arguably meeting the definition for the higher level elite athlete (Mallett and Hanrahan, 2004) (see footnote 10). Several athletes have won European Championship titles at Senior, U23, and Junior level, some hold British records or have won National titles, several athletes have won a medal at major World Championships or have won prestigious Diamond League competitions. Some are at the start of their international careers, have represented their home nation at Commonwealth Games level or competed at major championships, including the Summer Olympic Games.

Demographic data relating to the participants are illustrated in tables 1 and 2 as follows:

Table 1. Demographic data relating to sex[19] of participants

	Participant group		
Sex	Athlete	Coach	Stakeholder
Female	4	1	1
Male	8	10	6

Table 2. Demographic data relating to ethnicity of participants

	Ethnicity				
Participant group	Black	Mixed Race	British Asian	White British	White Irish/ Northern Irish
Athlete		1		11	1
Coach			2	8	1
Stakeholder	1			5	1

Several issues could be considered as having critical implications for my study. First, most interviewees did not draw reference to their ethnicity nor divulged how they wished their ethnicity to be recognised (Table 2). In inferring their cultural origins, I may have made erroneous assumptions based on subconscious bias. Second, the unequal distribution of sex and ethnicity sampled is not representative of the diversity within UK sport and high-performance athletics (Tables 1 and 2). To illustrate this point, I have drawn from a 2009 study which suggests that in elite sport, '…UK Sport estimates that 10.3% of its funded athletes are from [Black and Minority Ethnicity] BME groups'; this is in comparison with '…7.9% of the 2001 UK population from such communities' (Long et al., 2009:27). Interestingly, population demographics were more diverse for coaching, as figures from UKSP suggest that 16% of the coaches comprising Team GB for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic

---

[19] This way of categorising participants is influenced by biological determinism. Not only is this binary defined by sex, but how these individuals identify by gender is also important for notions of power.

Games were from BME groups (Long et al., 2009). In contrast, at the time of writing, there has been a fall in the number of funded athletes from minority ethnic backgrounds to five percent (Campelli, 2017) and a redefinition of the term to include Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicity (BAME).

Gatekeepers and the keepers of the faith

Gaining access to those participants I identified as being potentially valuable for their stories and standpoints, is a challenging matter for the cultural outsider (Flick, 2014; Silk; 2005). One such approach to help mediate barriers is the use of appropriate, active, and effective gatekeepers. Thus, '…contacting some people who act as entry points, eliciting the names of others' that they think would be first, valuable interviewees and second, willing to share their experiences, is very good research practice (Bellotti, 2014:61). Thus, the research sample is not decided *a priori,* but actively constructed during fieldwork. This highly effective method of recruitment is termed snowballing or chain sampling (Patton, 2015:298) and has benefited my research. The use of five prolific first order gatekeepers has proved invaluable as I have been able to interview participants who were beyond my sphere of influence. As an example, I was able to gain access to Richie, an elusive European Champion through a chain of three recommendations.

Interviewing a manager from England Athletics yielded two more athletes from his camp. In this way, not only did he act as an intermediary, but he was also exercising his influence in allowing me access to athletes after he had vetted me. No doubt he was assessing me as much as I was writing myself into the shared narrative of the interview experience (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Patton (2015:298) refers to this open-ended naturalist aspect of qualitative inquiry as '…sequential and emergence-driven sampling strategies'. Nonetheless, far from progressing in a neat unilinear fashion, Patton also needs to consider that the research sample is constituted by the environment in a circuitous, serendipitous manner and is as much a product of

power relations as any other part of the research process. To elaborate, the gatekeepers control access, as my last example demonstrates, subjecting me to power. Referring to my supervisory meeting notes, I am reminded of a conversation with my DoS:

> These gatekeepers control access to participants subjecting you [the researcher] to power. They can close gates as much as they open then if they desire. They have padlocks to gates you didn't even know existed.

Further reading substantiates these concerns, for:

> Accessing potential participants not only requires providing information about the research, but also that individuals are in a position to exercise choice around whether or not to give their consent to participate. Yet much qualitative research relies upon gate-keepers as a route of initial access to participants (Miller and Bell, 2002:55).

Here, the notion of gatekeeper control over potential participants has ethical implications, especially for informed consent. Equally, being beholden to the caprices of others can take control out of the hands of the researcher and introduces a sizable element of chance or serendipity to the proceedings. Rather than a participant being on a researcher's wish list, the gatekeeper can influence the direction of the research accordingly. Yet, despite viewing this as a problem, I first took the view that this opens up multiple possibilities with multiple outcomes. Surely more varied and potentially more interesting participants can arise from widening the net? A further advantage is that it avoids being obligated to predetermined lists of one's own networks (Bellotti, 2014).

Revisiting these issues, however, causes me to reconsider my position where even though my research is predicated on data generated upon expert sampling (Etikan et al., 2016), chain sampling may actually open up issues of participant bias. Thus, 'People tend to associate not only with people of the same study selection characteristics but also with other characteristics' (Patton, 2015:298). This may account for the outward lack of demographic diversity amongst participants in my study, but also may see more homogeneity in other ways, suggesting repeated themes or a concentration of isolated factors that may influence the reading of the

data. Furthermore, other issues that concern me are elements of generalisation, and how, in keeping to postmodern sensibilities, I am not seeking a universal theory to apply to sporting relationships as in a random or convenience sample. Instead, I am looking for specific people who have something worthwhile to say about the pressures of high-performance sport.

Reflecting upon the recruitment process causes me to contemplate the cooperative dynamic between myself and my gatekeepers. Here, they have not acted totally independently, but have liaised with me frequently. We created target lists and discussed both formal and informal strategies for how we might approach potential recruits. To illustrate the degree of involvement, effort, tactics, and chance that goes into gaining access, I draw upon my Researcher Fieldnote Journal where I travelled to Northern Ireland and completed a number of interviews:

> Result! Evelyn and I worked really hard to set up and facilitate the interviews over the race weekend and now I am completely exhausted. She got me in to prestigious pre and post-race private events that I would never have been able to access and introduced me to some really fascinating people, be they athletes, coaches or Governing Body personnel. Building up my contacts in this way has been accelerated, but I didn't account for the significant amount of face work and emotional labour that goes into generating and maintaining my interested interviewer role… (February, 2018).

I found that the emotional labour that went into maintaining face was substantial, for it was a role that I maintained for several days (Hochschild, 2012).

There is a game to be played here, and I have learned when to use discretion and patience, and when to take initiative and risk. For example, I would not have gained access to Felix, a high-performance jumps coach, if I had given up at the first attempt to recruit him. It took 11 months, several emails and a deliberate chance meeting before securing my interview. Through conscious face work and strategic manipulation of the social context, I tried to maintain a particular version of myself

throughout the social encounter that piqued and sustained his interest (Goffman, 1959). On reflection, it was akin to a seduction (just as the interview itself is a form of seduction).

Alternatively, after gaining an 'in' to an elite distance runner and striking up a rapport, the follow-up email trail ran dry. By way of contrast, another elite athlete (Lauren) who took just two weeks from initial contact to completion of the interview! This illustrates just how much (unseen) work goes into planning and orchestrating the recruitment of participants and is seldom referred to in the final report of most research. I found that creating an encrypted excel spreadsheet was the only way I could keep track of my network of prospective participants, detailing my efforts in where I was up to in terms of first point of contact, follow-up arrangements, interview planning, completion, and post-interview activities.

Dealing with data

Moving from the temporal and contextual nature of the interview as it unfolded warrants an account of the next series of steps. Several main body interviews were fully transcribed with the majority of the interviews being partially transcribed. Not only was this a time consuming exercise (each hour of audio data took me five hours to transcribe), but this seemingly straightforward activity became a much more muddied and complex issue in terms of moving from audio (with all its richness of intonation, stress, rhythm, and cadence) to the stripped-down black and white of text on a page. Schostak (2006:68) muses on the process of transcription, 'There is always a transformation, some would say a reduction, a loss and thus an impact on validity, truth'. Writing this, I am reminded of a supervisory meeting with my DoS in which we discussed the process of removal when we

transform interviews into text. The following is from my supervisory meeting notes:

> Bill talked about being aware of the degree of separation that can occur when we go through stages of data creation and managing data itself. With each phase of data manipulation, be it in transcribing or data analysis, there is the potential to move further away from the original, raw, unmediated experience of the *vis-à-vis* interview. He cautioned me to stay close to the audio and return to my recordings often as I could, so not to lose the immediacy and intimacy of those moments in time (July, 2018).

Indeed, in formulating a transcription, moving from oral to written data, raises questions as to representation and authenticity (MacLean et al., 2004; Sandelowski, 1994). Which is more 'real?' Indeed, can we even use the word 'real' when 'data' as a constructed and negotiated phenomenon is discussed from a postmodern approach? Gubrium and Holstein (1997:93) question the notion of authenticity and meaning when they ask if a simple transcript of an interview can '…really faithfully represent its lived qualities, particularly in its "core" tone?' As a counter, some audio-recordings were not transcribed, but evaluated aurally. By deciding not to transcribe all the interviews I was able to devote the time saved to listen back to the data, immersing myself in it. Consequently, these musings lead me to consider further, slippery concepts, often glossed over.

Notwithstanding the care and emotional energies required to create a credible interpretation of an interview after the event, can we even be sure that an interview actually captures notions of truth in the first place? And is this even the correct concept to use?

To elucidate further, this problematic term has been fiercely debated in academic circles for decades (e.g. Britzman, 1995; Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991; Mease, 2016; St. Pierre, 2000). For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider truth to be an intertwined notion of internal validity and credibility as being a unitary perceptible reality that can be measured. For me, this is troublesome on two levels: first, that by presenting truth as objective and sitting outside of context sets it at odds with

the poststructuralist notion of multiple realities and manifold subjectivities (Avner et al., 2014). When dealing with people's viewpoints and multiple shifting perceptions, the truth is very much a fluid social construct. Second, can such a nebulous concept actually be reduced to be something which can be measured and quantified? Postpositivists might think so, but this is something that I reject. Furthermore, I suggest that poststructuralism is also troublesome as it falls short in guiding researchers in what to do with data.

This leads me to question what this means for my own research. Rather than having an arbitrary and unsubstantiated belief in the truth as purely objective, unchanging, and omnipresent, I look to the notion of verisimilitude as a way of suggesting legitimate answers to the research question (Denzin, 1989; Tracy, 2010). Furthermore, Richardson (2000b:254) claims that notable research expresses a reality that is persuasive and plausible, providing '…a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the "real"'. In this vein I hope to produce evocative and emotive accounts that are reflexively engaging and with a trustworthiness that appears authentic. In addition, I look to sport sociology which seeks to locate multiple standpoints and facets of truths that are only revealed through a more inclusive understanding of the context where encounters are witnessed and translated (Johnson et al., 2013). This appreciation of context is vital for although each situation is singular, it should evoke critical understandings of comparable examples to create resonance (Burke, 2016; Tracy, 2010).

Far from being obsessed with limiting and limited interpretations of truth, I wish to create evocative readings of other people's lived experiences that speak to others in terms they recognise. To this end, I find myself in agreement with the social scientist Gergan (2004) as he strongly emphasises the importance of language, taking the position that:

> Knowledge is never abstract, objective and absolute, but always concrete, situated and tied to human practice. There is no Truth, only localised truths (cited in Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018:37).

After these esoteric considerations of the philosophy of truth, representation, and the slippery nature of language and data, convention suggests that I should account for my approach to data analysis in order to provide transparency and academic rigour (Flick, 2014; Silverman, 2016). To accurately describe the mechanics of decision making, and to trace the influence of voice and authorial power in the creation of my storied section, are challenging for two reasons. First, the requirement to meticulously document everything to give transparency is grounded in postpositivism and would sully the ontological tenets of poststructural and postmodern approaches. Qualitative research is so contextual that it cannot be duplicated exactly by other researchers, so the notion that I need to explicate my procedures and approach to data analysis is problematic. Second, these practices do not follow a neat, linear process. Instead, they are significantly entangled and pose an appreciable challenge to make sense of these twisting, encircling, and looping hermeneutics (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018). Nevertheless, to attempt to account for the messiness of conducting qualitative research is of interest to other researchers, and may contribute towards establishing trust, credibility and rigour (Burke, 2016; Tracey, 2010).

In doing so, I offer that data analysis is not a one-off engagement, or something to be tagged onto the back of research. I align myself with my DoS who argues against treating data analysis as an add on process for it causes a '…false division between the rest of the research process and analysis' (Taylor, 2014:182). In contrast, I was constantly troubled by my engagement with the data. By reading into the data from the start of the interview process, to keeping close to the audio and transcripts, through to the final phases of refining my thesis has helped its fluidity and coherence. Furthermore, constantly questioning how my data has allowed me to answer the research aims is crucial in deriving readings. This was no easy undertaking, for at times, I found it totally disorientating.

Furthermore, I argue that by reading data through a poststructural standpoint allows me to consider multiple perspectives, polyvocality, and shifting views from an onto-epistemological perspective. To do so emphasises the temporal notion of research, which is open to interpretation (King, 2015; Schostak, 2006). In particular, I have tried to be mindful of analysing data through the concepts of the *bricoleur,* which includes my paradigmatic allegiances, researcher position, concept of fragmented selves, and poststructural frameworks of power (Frost et al., 2010; Kincheloe, 2001). I have endeavoured to demonstrate this fragmentation and transience in my reflective writing, supervisory meetings, conversations with critical friends, and presenting at conferences. I contend that these activities have added value to my research, adding rigour and authenticity (Smith and McGannon, 2018). Although I have rejected conventional activities such as member checking and triangulation for their postpositive connotations, Smith and McGannon's (2018) paper has been useful in contextualising and problematising rigour and universal criteria in judging qualitative research. I offer that my supervisory meetings, phone calls, emails and conversations with gatekeepers have resulted in a form of intra-investigator reliability, with a thorough academic assessment of my data creation, readings, and concepts. For the most part, being able to debate and defend my decisions about data representation in a supportive and meaningful way has been crucial in driving my storied section.

The question remains, how did I get here? Why did I choose these stories and how did I decide what to include (and what to leave out)? Out of the 30 interviews, it appears that I have privileged only five stories. In carefully selecting these stories as illustrative of the unique nature of the coach-athlete relationship(s), I have also demonstrated the unequal power relationships that exist between researcher and participant. Although it may seem that I have ignored the majority of my conversational partners, I contend that listening to their stories have changed me and their voices resonate in these accounts. Furthermore, to give colour and context to my stories, I have interwoven additional voices from over half of the

interviewees that contribute to Richardson's (2000a) notion of fullness and thick description.

Accounting for these decisions suggests that this was logical and straightforward, when in reality it was fraught with difficulty and ethical dilemmas. Ultimately the responsibility for my research rests with me, so I am mindful of my privileged researcher position in selecting stories that I judge to be representative of inimitable multiple operations and manifestations of power in elite sporting system (Carless and Douglas, 2013). Simply, I chose the first story because it interested me. Kira was intelligent, persuasive and unafraid to challenge institutional power structures; I had to credit her experiences and bring them to a larger audience. By selecting a story that spoke to me, I could see where the power lay and crafted a story around five points of interest as a framework. The sequence was also important. I began with Kira, a female distance athlete as this was my earliest attempt at writing a full story, followed by Aaron, an inspiring male coach and sports administrator. I interviewed Aaron towards the end of my fieldwork and considered him to be a counterpoint to Kira, presenting alternative accounts of power. The middle of the section was held together by the strength of Maeve's account, herself an articulate track athlete with contentious views. Following this was Steve's story, himself a head coach and employee of the team sponsor, who brought a different dynamic to the concepts of power. The finale of the data section was represented by Lauren, an Olympic field event athlete whose thoughtful, insightful musings captured my interest and provided an illuminative set of readings from which to explore the unique nature of the coach-athlete relationship(s).

Ethical considerations of research

> When designing any research involving data collection from people researchers are morally, and often legally required to ensure that those involved with the research will come to no harm (Amis, 2005:111).

This seems so simple, but in thought and practice is actually far from straightforward. Indeed, it can be hard to achieve, for '…fieldwork is a demanding craft that involves both coping with multiple negotiations and continually dealing with ethical dilemmas' (Punch, 1994:85). Far from a simplistic tool, 'The politics and ethics of the interview as a contested field of action cannot be overlooked' (Schostak, 2006:51). Thus, ethical considerations are far from utilitarian being satisfied by a simple tick box activity, or something to be achieved prior to starting the research (and then ignored). In this sense, I argue that a considerable amount of attention must be paid to ethical concerns as they are imbricated throughout the entire research process from inception to dissemination. Subsequently, as my research unfolded it became clear to me that I needed to do justice to these anxieties and explore these issues in greater depth. Before immersing the reader in the extensive data Chapter that follows, I believe that a designated Chapter that explores my attempt to become a critically reflexive and ethically minded qualitative researcher is justified (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Meyrick, 2006).

CHAPTER VII - ETHICS IN THE 'AGE OF CONSENT'

Philosophical foreplay

Qualitative research in general has seen a growing awareness and increasing sensitivity to the ethics and politics of representation when used in the social sciences and humanities (e.g. Denzin, 2002; Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Lincoln and Denzin, 2003). This concern with emerging ethical issues, not only in the creation and undertaking of research, has concerned me in how best to represent the interests of my participants and the data that is generated. From the mid-1980s, beginning with debates in ethnography (Clifford and Marcus, 1986), investigators writing in paradigms that reject the tenants of positivism have problematised the formation, presentation, and dissemination of what counts as knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Richardson, 2000a; St. Pierre, 2011). In realising these interwoven questions about representation, legitimacy, and authority of the text, qualitative investigators have '…made research and writing more reflexive and called into question the issues of gender, class, and race' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:18) thereby shattering foundational principles of objectivity, reliability, and validity (Silk et al., 2005). In this sense, I have tried to incorporate a degree of reflexivity and awareness of how my subjectivity contributes towards the creation of new knowledges.

Writing from a blend of postmodern and poststructuralist sensibilities, I argue that an extension to the politics of representation is necessary when considering researchers' conduct towards and the treatment of participants in qualitative research. Some efforts have been made to locate the central issues of power and process in qualitative research, thus democratising the research process and encouraging disclosure and authenticity between agents (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009; Richardson, 2000a; Smyth and Williamson, 2004). Nonetheless, this is not straightforward and this credible attempt to problematise the research process

poses multiple ethical dilemmas and serious methodological challenges to qualitative research. Moreover, there is a tendency to oversimplify and present as unproblematic the ethical and political aspects of confidentiality, informed consent, and anonymity in the treatment of our research participants, data formation and the quest for new ways of knowing. This Chapter will consider the interrelations between these elements, also drawing on ethics of care, power relations, research goals, and presentation of data. In doing so, I hope to lay bare my own researcher practices, adopting a transparent approach that incorporates elements of reflexivity that ultimately has a bearing on data integrity and credibility.

A question of ethics in action

For qualitative researchers, the politics of representation are intimately associated with ethical conduct, including the ethics of the interview process and what it generates. Ethical complications in interview research principally result from the intricacies of '…researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena' (Birch et al., 2002:1). Whereas Berg (2001) and others (Flick, 2014; Moch and Gates, 2000) have acknowledged some of the unique ethical challenges that test the credibility and trustworthiness of social science research, the political and procedural ethical aspects of representation is far from settled. For example, for Ethics Committees in the UK and Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) in North America, these issues are often viewed as challenges that can be met if one adopts a comprehensive procedural ethical chain approach (Palmer, 2016; Silverman, 2013).

In contrast, I reject this by suggesting that even the notion of informed consent can be fraught with complexities. According to Moch and Gates (2000:57), informed consent means:

> ...the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress or similar inducement or manipulation.

In the light of my subsequent reading and research aims I ask: is it ever acceptable to deceive? Is there such a thing as appropriate deception? Interestingly, there is a lack of consensus amongst qualitative researchers. Some such as Kent (2000a) propose that informed consent must be sought fairly and openly with no deception or implicit pressure applied. Other researchers have debated this openness, proposing that it:

> ...gives rise to two problems: 1. Revealing your true interests may influence what people say or do. 2. People may not be able to make sense of the scientific terms you use to define your research problem (Silverman, 2013:177).

Silverman cautions researchers to not divulge true motivations, to avoid (mis)leading the participant and contaminating the data. Yet, I must be careful here, as I consider Silverman to be writing as a postpositivist who seeks to limit the influence of the researcher. Yet, if I am taking a poststructural and postmodernist approach, the idea of data contamination is redundant as the researcher is already complicit in the data generation and recognised as being the central author to the research endeavour (Lather, 1993). Implicated as I am, however, one of the central themes of this research considers words and language to be potent and powerful instruments (Richardson, 2000a; Schostak, 2006), conjuring particular impressions and driving participants' responses. Therefore, I am in agreement with Christians (2005:144) who cautions investigators against full disclosure of intent or a complete statement of the research problem for:

> In these cases, a degree of deception is thought to be appropriate providing the well-being of a participant and their well-being is respected.

Thus, I have given thought to how I present my ISP which in turn satisfies the conditions for obtaining informed consent. Rather than divulge my interest in power dynamics between coach and athlete, I have avoided the loaded term power. I have instead referred to my research as *Coach-athlete interaction and politics within elite track and field athletics in the UK* as neutral title on the ISP. Furthermore, I have presented this research as being '…interested in the development and evolution of the coach-athlete relationship(s), focusing on the processes of interaction and politics'. Subsequently, I have also given careful thought to the wording of the questions on my interview script. Alvesson (2002) exhorts us to consider how politically loaded terms could be interpreted, emphasising the relationship between words, meaning, power, and discourse. Despite a certain degree of dissimulation exercised, I do not consider this academic study to be unethical, but I offer these thoughts to demonstrate the complexities and unfolding nature of these often unconsidered factors. On reflection, I am not sure the notion of ethics leads itself to simple binaries; however, I note that issues of deception can be problematic (Kent, 2000b).

Moreover, another source of contention lies in the approach to the research chosen, for the issues that arise in qualitative approaches may be very different to the ethical aspects related to quantitative research:

> The conception of the participant as a data source – that is, as a locus of variables to be observed and manipulated by the researcher – is not tenable in narrative and qualitative research where participants play a much more active role as narrators and interpreters in their own experience (Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe, 2001:164).

Here, Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe (2001) together with other authors (Eggly, 2002; Jachyra et al., 2014; Nunkoosing, 2005) espouse the uniqueness of qualitative inquiry that celebrates the participant as a dynamic collaborator and co-creator of knowledge. Furthermore, by treating all research participants to the same ethics protocols derived from the universal adoption of positivist empiricism

is at best misguided and at worst could incur hazards or cause hurt. This concern is twofold:

> First, ethical codes that are not method-sensitive may constrain research unnecessarily and inappropriately. Second, and just as importantly, the ritualistic observation of these codes may not give real protection to research participants but actually increase the risk or harm by blunting ethnographers' [and other social science researchers'] sensitivities to the method-specific issues which do arise (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001:340).

If we keep to the standard bioethics definition of harm as '…a setback to a person's interests', wider consideration of the many different ways that a person may be harmed (beyond that of physical well-being) should be taken into account (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004:278). A more comprehensive treatise of the problems assessing social research in general within the largely medical ethics committee framework, is provided by Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001) and continued by Israel and Hay (2006).

More specifically, writers conducting research in sport science and sports coaching have emphasised that because of its historical location in the positivistic tradition, ethics committees may not be suitably alerted to the ethical problems posed by qualitative research (Brustad, 2011; Olivier and Fishwick, 2003; Palmer, 2016). Ultimately, if we rigidly adhere to the rules of IRBs and Ethics Committees we '…run the risk of conducting poor and inadequate research without increasing any protection to those being studied' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:106). They continue:

> Responsive interviewers have an obligation going beyond any rules set up by IRBs to deal ethically with their conversational partners, respect interviewees and honour any promises made (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:97).

Thus, to rigidly employ bio-medical research values and view them as principles of best practice is injurious to qualitative research and those conducting or participating in it. Equally, it can be viewed as yet another example of how elements of positivism infiltrate and contaminate the workings of other paradigms.

In particular, these concerns with the (mis)appropriation of positivistic-derived ethical practices drives further questions of anonymity and confidentiality, in which the researcher is obligated to protect the privacy and respect the rights of their respondents. As qualitative interviewing often makes forays into the private thoughts, experiences, and perspectives of individuals, possibly dealing with sensitive or taboo subjects, it is often seen as a breach of trust and ethically reprehensible to disclose personal data that might allow an individual to be identified, if they do not wish it. Indeed, 'The single most likely source of harm in social science inquiry' is the divulgence of intimate knowledge believed harmful by experimental participants (Reiss, 1979:73). In addition, the heavyweight godparents of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (2011:66), also consider the issue, exhorting that:

> Confidentiality must be a primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. All personal data ought to be secured or concealed or made public only behind a shield of anonymity. Professional etiquette uniformly concurs that no-one deserves harm or embarrassment as a result of insensitive research practices.

This is especially relevant to small communities or populations where the identities of respondents could be easily gleaned, potentially impacting on reputations and prospects. This is specifically pertinent to my field of high-performance athletics, in which many of the respondents are known to each other, have a public profile, or would otherwise be able to be identified in professional sports circles.

Equating anonymity with confidentiality

On first reading, the two terms are linked and appear to reinforce each other, but these words are often conflated and, if not scrutinised, may lead to an obscuring of practice. Taken to its extreme, confidentiality means that no information disclosed to the interviewer will be made public; it will be kept strictly private and between the researcher and respondent. In a research setting, however, this is untenable as we would have no research to work with. Nevertheless, there may be aspects of the interview that are marked as 'confidential' to which the researcher is duty

bound to honour; information disclosed to the interviewer in this way is deemed private and not to be passed on to others (Jones et al., 2012). Walford (2005:85) explores these issues suggesting:

> That it is ethical, of course, for researchers to keep confidential any information that they receive this way – but it is totally ludicrous to offer confidentiality to respondents about the totality of the information that they give to researchers. The researcher's job is essentially that of generating information from respondent and after due analysis, passing this on to others.

In this way, strict confidentiality as a premise (or promise) in qualitative research cannot and should not be assured. In the context of my work as a researcher, findings are discussed with knowledgeable others in the research setting as appropriate. Thus, in qualitative research, it may be more appropriate that confidentiality '…refers to agreements with participants about what may be done with the data that arise from their participation' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:94). Therefore, I will consider the British Sociological Association's (BSA) endorsement of the researcher having an obligation both to protect the welfare of those implicated by their work and to share their analyses accurately with sensitivity and veracity (BSA, 2017). Specifically, Wiles et al. (2008:417) frame confidentiality in terms of:

> …the principle of respect for autonomy and is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed without permission.

On this level, confidentiality is closely associated with anonymity, in that anonymity is a function of confidentiality. This definition is substantiated by other writers who have considered the subtleties of meaning, thus '…confidentiality is an active attempt to remove from the research records any element that might indicate the subjects' [sic] identities' (Moch and Gates, 2000:57).

In its strictest form, the term anonymity means that the identity of the interviewee or source is not known to anyone, even the researchers (Lahman et al., 2015). Applying this degree of anonymity (outside of internet surveys) is difficult, unrealistic, and undesirable. On a more practical level, anonymity requires researchers not to disclose the name of the respondent, but can be extended to mean not revealing identifying information about any person or research location (Walford, 2005). This is corroborated further in the literature where:

> …methods for preserving anonymity should be used including the removal of identifiers, the use of pseudonyms and other technical means for breaking the link between data and identifiable individuals (BSA, 2017:7).

Nonetheless, this is not without its issues and for us raises two problems. First, the language that the BSA chooses to use is questionable and we should be wary of categorically assuring participants that anonymity would be preserved. In terms of my research, it is possible that because of the select community from which I have recruited, people would be able to accuracy guess the identity of the interviewees despite my efforts to disguise them. Thus, I would be unable to guarantee their complete anonymity; I could only appraise them of the steps I have taken to attempt to do so. Second, the use of anonymity does not apply to all aspects of confidentiality, for the term '…also means not disclosing any information gained from an interview deliberately or accidently in ways that might identify an individual' (Wiles et al., 2008:417-8).

Further problematising anonymity

An additional ethical concern and particular point of departure from postpositive research, is that if researchers automatically assume anonymity, it can disallow the respondent their own voice and to dissociate them from the creative act of knowledge formation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). This is another expression of unequal power relations inherent in the research process that privilege the researcher and silences the researched. Problematising this issue and making visible these hidden power dynamics helps to sensitise the researcher to the

multifaceted aspects of representation. Consequently, Rubin and Rubin (2005) have expressed that participants, particularly interviewees, might want to be identified and claim exposure for their group, 'In that case, ethical concerns require you to identify your participants, not keep their identities confidential' (106). Rather than assuming that anonymity is desirable and standard, researchers should be very clear in how '...they will protect the anonymity of responses if interviewees request anonymity' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:106). Thus, qualitative inquiry bears a responsibility to both the participants and their stories in contributing to the credibility of the research process and verisimilitude of findings. We may do injustice to participants in silencing their voices.

Similarly, Lahman et al. (2015) corroborate this concern, expressing the discomfort of enforced anonymity and an unwanted, ill-suiting pseudonym:

> Bernadette: I was confused, I mean how was she [the researcher] going to tell my story without my name? I said I wanted to use my own name. She did not seem ok with that. … After reading her account of me, I felt I wasn't even present anymore … my story was gone. I felt stripped of who I was and was not good enough (Lahman et al., 2015:447).

In this context, the interviewee felt alienated from her own narrative and this does not reflect well on the quality of the research. Furthermore, there is a danger that in our obsession with attempts to preserve anonymity, we lose the essential personal description that is necessary to give further context and meaning to the research process (Allen and Wiles, 2016). As researchers, we have an obligation to credit the participant as a partner in the creation of new knowledge, yet we hold that position of power (Nunkoosing, 2005). Separating a person's identity from their voice is, therefore, ethically problematic, which is why it is important for the respondent to have full ownership of this issue.

This particular problem of protecting privacy and anonymity is further complicated when there is a real potential for the identity of participants to be gleaned by insiders or others from the description or personal narrative from the written reports. For this reason:

> …despite signature status of privacy protection, watertight confidentiality has proved to be impossible. Pseudonyms and disguised locations are often recognised by insiders. What researchers consider innocent is perceived as misleading or even betrayal (Punch, 1998:175).

The accidental effects of disclosure are troublesome for the ethically reflexive researcher. This may severely impact on the quality of the research if the product is compromised by dialling back perceived negative aspects of a narrative, thus negating the potency and diminishing meaning (Jones et al., 2006). In counter to this, Mellick and Flemming (2010) created a depiction of a specific rugby player with a recognisable profile despite thorough attempts at anonymisation. The researchers defended their decision not to conceal or leave out vital aspects of his life story as it would have compromised the theoretical framework used, weakening the analysis. This runs counter to Flick's advice never to mention '…concrete information about the interviewee or other persons mentioned' and even if the interviewee provides it in the interview, '…you will have to take care to anonymise such information in the transcript' (Flick, 2014:57). In my Reflexive Journal I have recorded this commenting:

> How problematic this is: contextual information is necessary to enrich the quality of the data, its credibility, its verisimilitude. Stripping an interview down, renders it sterile and plays into the reductionist trap that codes and files human experience as an isolationist exercise (April, 2019).

My concerns about anonymity are also complicated by the critical discord between privacy and the digital playground that we inhabit in various ways. For each person exists in a socio-cultural context where identity, social interaction, and the notion of the self plays out in the public sphere. It is a place where our storied lives are readily documented, presented, and consumed by our 'interview society' (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997). Indeed, we might argue that we are now living through an 'Age of Information' (Hajnal, 2018; Mason, 2017) in which the multimedia world

connects us, creates digital versions of ourselves, subsumes us, and plays to our ever increasing desire to place everything online and live vicariously in a global digital, hyperreal world (Eastin et al., 2016). If the lines between the private, the personal, and the public have become blurred, where does that leave qualitative inquiry?

To help me formulate a response, I turn to the sports specific literature on ethics, where the author states:

> Whilst it is important to recognise the power differential implicit in the research endeavour, there is a risk of universalising vulnerability, and removing agency and choice from the subjects involved (Palmer, 2016:320).

Contemplating Palmer's caution that questions the assumption of the disempowered participant, brings me to Rubin and Rubin's consideration of interviewees as 'conversational partners' (2005:14). For if '…interviewees share in the work and fun of discovery, often guiding in channels of their own choosing' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:14), should qualitative researchers honour that role more? This cooperative enterprise finds support in Connor et al. (2018) who champions an ethics system that treats participants more as research collaborators than potential victims. In this respect, assuming that participants need protecting is inherently patronising as it infantilises them. This becomes especially pertinent when I am involving elite athletes; surely they deserve more respect, to own their agency and identity? In keeping to rigid codes of ethics, who am I to deny them this?

Naming as an act of intimacy and power

> The act of naming is an act of power. Parents naming children, conquerors naming new lands, and organisations naming themselves all involve the assertion of authority and control. Names allow us to communicate through the development of shared meanings (Guenther, 2009:412).

In contemporary Western culture, personal names are replete with considerable meaning and significance (Jenkins, 2014). In particular, names contribute to developing a narrative sense of self and in creating a specific construction of reality

(Bruner, 1991; Mehrabian, 1997). In responding to these issues, researchers such as Hurst (2008:345) are '…concerned about the power of the researcher to rename his or her respondents. Personal names *do* matter' (original emphasis). Rather than ride rough shod over participants, she treads carefully through this often ignored, yet highly charged political aspect of the research endeavour. In doing so, she demonstrates the obligations of the researcher to the research participants and, by implication, their responsibility to the ethical implications of renaming people. Here, with the ubiquitous use of pseudonyms, the '…acts of naming are political and personal' (Allen and Wiles, 2016:15). These musings on the power of names and naming brings me to argue the position that names not only have important personal, cultural, and political value, but they are of central concern to the committed qualitative researcher.

Disappointingly, given how important the question of naming in qualitative research is, little reflection is devoted to the political act of naming research participants (Guenther, 2009; Hurst, 2008; Lahman et al., 2015). Likewise, Hurst (2008) and Wiles et al. (2008) lament the limited guidance in the literature for the process of naming or choosing participant pseudonyms. Worse, the universal assumption of the use of pseudonyms as unquestioned and ethically sound, renders invisible the inherent power dynamics and messy realities of conducting fieldwork within social sciences (Wiles et al., 2008). Ironically, this practice of blindingly and unthinkingly allocating pseudonyms is at odds with adopting positions that move beyond the postpositivist paradigm. Challenging objective social science and speaking against reductionism and logical positivism, writers such as Kelly (2008) and Walford (2005) have made welcome contributions to this topic by exploring the ubiquitous and unquestioned use of pseudonyms. Furthermore, authors such as Allen and Wiles (2016), Guenther (2009), Hurst (2008) and Lahman et al. (2015) have gone further, not only debating the interrelations and assumptions between anonymity and confidentiality, but have explored and made transparent the processual and political elements of naming.

In addition, it is no coincidence that these writers have agreed that the process of selecting pseudonyms holds significance in qualitative research. Guenther (2009) reminds us that 'Because names are powerful, choosing to use – or to alter – them is also an act of power' (413). Thus, choosing pseudonyms with thought and care is central to the stories that we desire to tell. If we take the poststructuralist position that the words we use are imbued with meaning and power, then names are more so.

> Like narrative research, how a story merits credibility can lie squarely in the way sources are interpreted by the reader depending on the writer's representation of participant naming (Lahman et al., 2015:449).

Thus, to disregard the implications of the process of naming as both a powerful and political act, is disingenuous to poststructural sensibilities, where balancing ethical obligations to participants and demonstrating a commitment to academic rigour should be central to the research process.

In this research, where my respondents have indicated that they would like their identities hidden, I have used a pseudonym; where they have wanted to own their name, I have used their orthonym. Thus, a mixture of pen names and actual names have been applied without explicitly being stated. Some researchers have allowed interviewees to select their own names in an attempt to re-negotiate power asymmetries between researcher and participant (Allen and Wiles, 2016; Guenther, 2009). Whist this can be successful, very often participants demure the honour, preferring to leave that in the hands of the researchers (Lahman et al., 2015). How researchers name their participants with integrity is key and for my part, I have endeavoured to be considerate of age, gender, culture, and ethno-national status or background when matching pseudonyms to their orthonyms (Hurst, 2008). This brings me to question my actions now that we are living in an age of consent. I am also in agreement with Allen and Wiles who state that:

> In balancing the tension between protecting participants' identities and preserving the richness of the data (Kaiser, 2009), a greater onus is placed on the researcher who wishes to both (2016:14-5).

162

In doing so, I loosely incorporated aspects of Hurst's (2008) framework for selecting names where she explains:

> I tried to come up with names that I intuitively felt would be of similar meaning and connotation. … New names roughly matched original names in length and complexity. I made an effort to rename students that had unusual names (uncommon either within or outside of their home communities) in such a way as to give the reader a sense of uncommonness. Students who had names either representative or unrepresentative of their ethnicity (345-6).

The point of 'uncommonness' resonated with me and this is illustrated in my choice of re-naming a coach with an unusual name with *Felix* (this name derived from the Latin also means 'happy' or 'lucky' and I thought suited the individual). Additionally, I tried to match the meaning of the new name with my impression of the participant, thus one interviewee who was vibrant, outspoken, and compelling, I called *Maeve*. One interpretation of this Irish name means 'warrior queen' and sat well with me. The choice of the Hebrew name *Aaron* for another coach matched the length of the orthonym and I considered his illuminating account to pair the meaning of his name ('enlightened'). I also maintain that the act of naming should not be dull, but neither should it be undertaken irreverently or discourteously:

> I think this issue of naming is an important one for qualitative researchers to address. It is another example of the power that resides on this side of the interview process, and one that we should be cautious about exercising (Hurst, 2008:346).

The writing of the Chapter that locates ethical issues as its central concern emerged over attempts to remain an ethically minded researcher at all stages. In adopting a postmodernist approach the role of the researcher and the politics of research become imbued with a critical reflexivity that incorporates ethics as an emergent process. Though I have located these concerns in a single Chapter, I hope that I have been sufficiently sensitive to the needs of my research participants, myself, and the data that is created in the stories that follow.

CHAPTER VIII - POWERED STORIES: ACCOUNTS FROM THE ARENA

Scouting the field

As with many qualitative researchers before me, I have read with interest the Denzin and Lincoln (2008) text *Introduction: The Disciplines and Practice of Qualitative Research*. It was most instructive; indeed, the notion that qualitative research has gone through a number of moments as each important issue has been confronted, considered, and thought about seemed to make perfect sense. After all, as a relatively new and developing set of paradigms, we should expect that internal debates, conflicts, and uncertainties should drive thoughtful practitioners to challenge not only their own assumptions and practice about the nature of qualitative research, but also to identify what unresolved issues still need to be addressed within the discipline.

So, it was with excitement that I read about the fifth moment and the *crisis of representation*. I was intrigued because of my own uncertainly about how I might best represent my own writing and thoughts, but also those of others involved in this study, which had troubled me since I started on this journey. And this text promised answers - so I thought. Moreover, my uneasiness was compounded by such comments from my DoS:

> …the self-doubt about modes of representation and the related ethical nature of those decisions never goes away and should been seen as part of researching with this genre (Supervisory Meeting Notes, November, 2019).

Maybe it was naïve of me to expect a set of answers and a blueprint on how to represent the processes and field materials generated by qualitative research. It was some time after reading about the crisis of representation in qualitative writing and research that I realised that the inclusive nature and possible options were not limiting and confusing, but full of possibilities and promise. Not only did this inclusiveness give me permission to be inventive in how I might craft my writing, but also how I was to interweave the voices of others into my work.

It encourages me, or forces me, to ask myself the question of 'how might I tackle and represent the field data that has emerged from my interaction with the athletes, coaches, and others in the last four years?'

I returned to more reading, this time the texts of other researchers writing within the paradigms to gain an insight into how others have completed these tasks. I read broadly including fictional text, ethnodrama, personal histories, poetry, and theorised and thematically inspired writing (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Denzin, 2003; Richardson, 1992; 2000a). I also sought out authors writing from a sports perspective (Atkinson, 2016; Birrell and MacDonald, 2000; Gilbourne, 2013; Jones, 2007; 2009; Potrac et al., 2012). I read writing that promised to deal with qualitative generated data in a sensitive and ethical manner, but then found that they lapsed back into postpositivist modes of presentations once the data was foregrounded. Maybe they were fearful that the freedom to be expressive will be deemed by others of lacking rigour. The anxiety is evident in my Reflexive Journal entry:

> ...I really do not know what to do for the best. The options seem to be endless and at times overwhelming. If I go down the easy[ier] thematic route I will ultimately disappoint myself and I fear others - if I gasp this opportunity to be different, to be brave and challenge myself I might learn a new approach and be true to my commitments to a postmodern and poststructuralist inspired study. It is evident that one of the problems with this [my] set of pledges is that there is a lack of writing on the subject within the available text. I am grappling in the dark. Maybe the criticism of the postmodernism agenda is that it offers plenty of critique, but fails to present what may be feasible alternatives to the 'status quo' holds true (June, 2018).

Thus, my disquiet around applying postmodern tendencies is exemplified by the following:

> Postmodernist discussion of – or attempts at – empirical research are rather limited in character. There are a number of general arguments about how *not* to conduct, for instance, ethnographic research, but more concrete guidelines on how it *should* be pursued are few and far between (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018:249 emphasis original).

It was after coming across the use of stories to illustrate the lives of sports people in the writing of Carless and Douglas (2013) that the possibilities of this mode of representation became apparent. As they suggest '…sport is storied' (2013:706); it has beginnings and ends, it has villains and heroes, drama and intrigue - there is a story to be told in sport. Even more so, it allows the personal and political to be intertwined into a narrative that will hopefully carry the reader while being authentic to those who own their own stories. Stories can also paint a picture of the powerful and the powerless, of the productive and negative effects of power, and the nuanced way its subtle nature fashions and shapes our behaviour (Birrell and McDonald, 2000; Markula and Pringle, 2006).

While as a platform for representing the pages of data this study has generated, stories seem to be appropriate, there are still questions surrounding equity of voice (Hertz, 1997; Richardson, 2000a). It is extremely difficult to give comparable voice to all that I have interviewed. I have neither the space, nor the energy, to do so. I will have to leave the majority of what people have shared with me on my computer. What to leave unspoken does not, and should not, sit easy with me. If I commit to privileging five stories of power in elite athletics, I will silence others whom I do not select (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018). Their voices, however, I have heard and allowed them to influence and shape my thinking and writing in a subtler way. I may not be able to use their direct speech to privilege their voice in the purist form, but their voice, I contend, does echo in the pages of this thesis.

I have selected five[20] stories to complete this Chapter. In doing so, I hope that they represent the range and depth in which power plays out in elite athletics in the UK. Within each story I will offer comment, critique, and an attempt to display the manners in which each individual account may share possible commonalities, differences, and particularities (Fine et al., 2000). In addition, I will draw attention to the ways in which we have historically theorised and conceptualised the

---

[20] I have used a combination of anonymised and non-anonymised names in respect to the direct wishes of my participants.

166

power-laden relationships evident in this sporting arena. I will suggest that if we wish to bring additional clarity, we need to think again about the complex nature of these relationships and reject the duality present in much of the existing research.

Finally, to clarify to the reader, although I am adding commentary to the stories, I will not be offering contextual theorisations of the coach-athlete relationship(s). I am taking this position in order to not clutter the accounts of my participants as I want their voice(s) to be pure and unfettered.

Kira's story - From the outside looking in: the trials and tribulations of an unfunded athlete

I start with the story of Kira, a highly driven and animated Summer Olympic athlete[21] who was keen to offer her views and experiences of the elite coach-athlete relationship(s). As a successful junior international athlete, she has also made the transition into the senior ranks, holds five British titles and enjoys a prestigious track career. During our conversation, Kira talked of the coaches who have been instrumental in her development into a performance athlete and gives credit and critique to these pivotal relationships. Together, we explored the nature of some of these relationships, with Kira being encouraged to reflect on and provide context for her personal stories. Our exchanges allowed Kira to craft and constitute experiences which made a lasting impression on me due to their poignancy and emotional appeal. From these stories, I offer the following narrative highlighting five central and interrelated subplots. First, the nature of these power-laden relationships appears transient as the temporal aspect of these affiliations suggest. Second, I suggest that the situational power that coaches can draw upon in their relationships with athletes waxes and wanes. Next, I read that Kira and both of her coaches, Seth and Marcus, appear to be in dynamic and reciprocal, if asymmetric power relationships that benefit or limit each party depending on perspectives taken. Fourth, that the funding aspect of elite athletics brings a new dynamic to the coach-athlete relationship(s) that I believe to be a crucial element in this story. Finally, I infer that further wider political forces emanating from the GB, such as selection issues for competition and training camps, impact on training practices and have direct implications for athletic performance. Together, consideration of these visible and invisible social forces provoke me to interpret these personal accounts, foregrounding the following narrative.

---

[21] Due to the nature of the sport of track and field athletics, any mention of the Olympic Games refers to the Summer Olympics.

Should I stay or should I go? Is there a use-by date on relationships?

I joined Kira at a '…very interesting time', for her as she mused over her recent decision to change athletics coaches at a crucial point in her career; one that she had not made lightly. Six months into Kira's new training set up she recounted:

> It was officially a week before the New Year (it seemed logical for me to start a fresh new year in my mindset!), but I had probably been thinking about it for the previous six months. However, I wanted to make sure it was very carefully thought out with my previous coach because we have had a very long-standing relationship and I am respectful of somebody who has developed me well in the sport. The main reason for changing coaches was for my own progression really. I just felt it was the right time in my career. I am 28, I am moving forward and I needed to revolutionise myself in a different way.

Kira's relationship with her previous coach Seth was evidently dear to her heart and one, which she acknowledged as central to her progressing through the ranks of club athletics and onto the international stage. Indeed, the relationship had longevity; '…close to 17 or 18 years', Kira indicated and added that he was, for her, '…a phenomenal coach', one that had nurtured and built a supportive and fun atmosphere in which to work:

> I think for me it was about the *environment* he created and within that environment I was able to foster characteristics that I guess made me successful, but equally so had a social aspect which was so enjoyable. So for example, I think I wouldn't have been as successful as I have as for as long as I have if I didn't enjoy it (and I've been competing at a high-level for over a decade). I think that the club set up, the environment that he gave me and the squad system, I believe, developed me in my early years of the sport. It was *fundamental* in terms of having someone to meet at the track, having that agreement that we were going to commit to a training session, and to push ourselves (emphasis added).

Such was the ease that Kira felt when working with Seth that she followed him to the university where he coached to maintain the relationship. Kira had the opportunity and was in a position where she could make the decisions and, thus, went on to consider the ways that she could continue to develop as the following

paired quotes suggests:

> I think that athletics is evolutionally, but I don't think it's a one form linear programme. This re-framing that I'm talking about has got to be cyclical; constantly recycled, constantly adapted. Yet you've got to not step away from what works, so there's that blend of knowing when to let the variables change and when to keep the variables the same.

> For the last two years I had probably reached a point with Seth where I was autonomous. I was giving the direction, giving what I needed to do, saying that 'I think we need to include this in our programme, I think this will work'. And I still had a lot of success. And I would say that in doing so Seth became a little bit less useful in a way and that sounds really harsh when I say it like that, but you have to work out where the responsibility weighs.

Kira seems to understand that she has options and uses her agency and power to seek out a new coach to get her out of a rut where she is not progressing. In this way, Seth's coaching capital depreciates in value as the relationship becomes less productive. The ties that give significance to the coach-athlete relationship(s) become old and worn and loyalty appears to give way to pragmatism. From her words, I suggest that Kira considers there to be a use-by date on the present relationship and considers alternatives to her situation.

Shifting notions of power in context

This idea that the coaching relationship has a temporal nature to it is something that Kira is aware of. She seems to indicate that as she matured as a person and became more settled as an athlete, the need to always take the lead from her coach became less. The situational power imbued in these relationships appears to depend on context. Kira offered:

> …looking back when starting out there was so much to learn. Moving from club to national standard and then on to international, it was all so new. At times, I felt lost. Seth provided all the answers and I needed that – it allowed me to focus on my performance and nothing else. He took all the pressure off, dealt with the politics and the other rubbish and left me to do just what I was good at.

If Kira felt the amount of control held by Seth left her powerless is difficult to tell. When talking about Seth, however, while there was always a warm affection held in her voice when discussing more recent times, there was an acknowledgement

that Seth's power was on the wane and there was a real need to build new relationships:

> I think he had got to the point in his own learning and his own coaching where he wasn't willing to learn anymore. So where did that leave me? I had risen to the top so many times I was like 'what's going to push me on now?' I also almost needed someone better than me to push me, rather being at the top of the pyramid helping everyone else…

Kira felt that with a new coach, one that she could approach, there were opportunities to redraw the lines of responsibility and power and to cast a newly moulded one that would, hopefully, last her until retirement.

Listening to the way she framed her stories and the experiences, she suggested to me that she was able to separate out the personal from the political in this close personal relationship. I draw this from the stripped down way she described her method of switching coaches. There appeared to be a business-like approach and seriousness to her manner that was unfettered by blind loyalty, perhaps reflecting the greater ambitions Kira now had for her athletics career. This is not to suggest that she just callously abandoned a committed coach, rather, she emphasised the stress she felt in considering his feelings and the fallout from '…the emotional attachment of a coach you've been with for a very long time'. Regrettably, this relationship was not able to translate to the world stage in the direction that Kira wanted. She continues:

> Unfortunately, I think I've taken it better than he has as I have come to realise what I need and what I would like to do. For me, the hard bit is having what I consider a close friend, but maybe now finds it really hard to probably speak to me.

Such is the difficulty of maintaining a changing relationship post break-up, especially when it is instigated by the assumed power-dependent party. For most types of power-relationships, there is usually the potential for resistance. Kira, perhaps not fully appreciating the politics and process by which the act of leaving challenges the agency and capital of her old coach, is still sensitive to the changing dynamics of a once central relationship.

In comparison, whilst Seth's views are not articulated, other voices bring different readings of the relationship with some inferring a controlling element to the exchange. Kira's new coach, Marcus suggests that:

> …there are certain coaching styles that make the athlete too dependent. Seth has 120 athletes on his roster and he is always on the phone to them, prescribing *this* session at *this* intensity, always wanting to know how that session went and how they performed. I don't have that daily contact with my athletes (emphasis added).

Considering these perspectives, I feel that Seth felt betrayed by Kira, who in daring to break the sacred, long-term, bonded relationship, replaced him with a rival coach. The whispers in the transcript point towards a tipping point, but feathers may have been ruffled and egos dented, especially as Kira finds herself being propelled towards greater accomplishments on the track.

This transfer to significant international success is also reflective of the transition and redefinition of the coach-athlete relationship(s). In our discussion, Kira concedes that her approach to her sport has altered as she has progressed through the ranks. Previously, as a club athlete and neophyte international athlete, she was combining her training with working. Now she is a full-time athlete with a concomitant cultural change in set-up and coaching environment with the sessions being more demanding. She reflects that the style of coaching is very different, giving the impression that Marcus's agency and influence is waxing as she commits and adjusts to a new environment. Indeed, the nuances and complexities of power are intriguing to observe as Kira had just undertaken an empowering act of autonomy by leaving her existing coach, only to find herself renegotiating the terms of a new coach-athlete relationship(s) in which she suggested that she has limited agency. She observes that she used to go training to enjoy herself, whereas the following paired quote states:

> …now it's my job – I really enjoy it, don't get me wrong but Marcus is very much on the watch; his expectations are much higher of me. At the moment I feel a lot of the time that I'm failing the sessions and I'm finding them more challenging and that's a hard start to the coaching relationship.

So it comes with new challenges and they are difficult, but I'm responding really well to them and I think that is a clear sign that the change was right, that my body is responding again. And I think towards the end with my previous coach was that the challenges weren't hard enough, and they became a bit easy and now I've got that impetuous back.

Contradictions and concessions

As the conversation developed, I sensed that Kira appeared to relax into her storytelling role more as she became eager to share her experiences in detail. Whether this was cathartic for her, or for the benefit of my research, or for some hidden reason, I may never know. What is of interest to me in the narration of this jostling for position is that it led to a whole array of other complex power relations being enacted amongst, between, and within the squad. Kira recounted quite proudly how she was considered to be the lead runner in the group and that Seth used her as a barometer against whom the other athletes were measured. She recounts that:

> Seth has been instrumental in developing loads of girls through the club ranks, through to National vests and international success. Seth helped support and foster that and I think another positive was his belief in me. I think I developed a lot of girls who came into that group as they got a lot out of training with me because *I know how to train* (emphasis added).

Both the animation in her voice and her choice of words conveyed a sense of satisfaction and I got the impression that Kira was used by her coach as a lieutenant, supporting and endorsing a regime and adding to the tightly controlled system. In return, she enjoyed a position of leadership, responsibility, and kudos. A kind of symbiotic relationship appeared to flourish, with the effects of power being imbued throughout every interaction and decision within the squad pyramid. Here, every run had to be fast, every session needed to be led from the front and there was no room for weakness or 'off-days'. The inflexibility of the system reflected the coach's control that appeared absolute and unbending. This reading came from Kira deliberating that she '…was committed to a club system putting a lot of effort into a rigid structure to bring a lot of other girls on'.

This over-reliance on Kira, however, came at a cost and she began to resent the situation she found herself in. The trade-off became one-sided where:

> I had difficulty managing my training sessions to be performance related and not just fitting in with tons of other athletes who had different requirements. … I got to the point where I didn't want to necessarily be able to sacrifice a small part of me for each session, I needed now to think about what is going to be the performance margins that are going to help me and that might be a designated training partner, that might be training at certain times on a certain surface…

Kira gave the impression that she may have found the position of power that she had negotiated for herself rewarding at first, which in turn, strengthened her loyalty towards her coach and squad. Perhaps this also contributed to Kira's development of her strong sense of self-identity, as power is crucial in reproducing identity. Over the years she became invaluable to Seth relying on her acting as his second. This reciprocal, if asymmetric, relation of power made disentangling herself from the set-up more difficult. The echoes in the transcript point to a moment when Kira got frustrated with being used as a development tool for the other athletes and the status of being the highest-ranking athlete lost its appeal and influence:

> Seth set up and ran this really effective development curve, and I mean he was really influential, but did *I need to be doing that* when I've done my apprentice work? Now I'm kind of ready to focus on recovery, getting my session done at this time and making my sessions more organised (emphasis added).

For Kira, her rigid role within the squad became disempowering as opposed to empowering and, thus, she began the process of seeking out a new squad environment. Whilst being problematic in the short term, this can be achieved whilst still holding the old coach in high esteem.

Up against the glass: frozen out of funding

The tone of the conversation then moved from interpersonal relations to the consideration of wider power networks, specifically concerning the culture of high-performance sport and UKA. Kira identified funding issues, selection policies, and the politics of UKA and its consumer brand British Athletics as complex aspects that were, to her, problematic. She communicated disappointment in trying to gain an 'in' to a power network that was to her, closed, unwelcoming, and unhelpful. At times it was unclear as to which element Kira was recounting; she slipped between describing the trials and tribulations of gaining or losing funding and the politics of selection for teams, competitions, or training camps. What was more apparent to me was her unflinching depiction of the way that she feels she has been treated by the influential institutional authorities. Interestingly, I did not get the impression that she was inviting unmitigated sympathy or playing the victim, but rather that she was using the encounter as a liberating experience, to offload the burden of '…an ostracised athlete'.

Rather than presenting an idealised version of the culture of high-performance sport, Kira was quite adamant in our conversation that the '…overall aim of high-performance sport is to buy medals' and that '…there is a win at all costs' approach that pervades the GB. Given the limited amount of money that UKA can access from UKSP, Kira appreciates that not everyone can receive funding, but she implies that the system is flawed, subjective, and riven with inconsistences and poor judgment. She articulated this feeling by saying:

> At the moment it is very much a talent-based system where I believe they [UKA] think athletes are made overnight. They are picking from a very small pool and investing a lot of money in less number of athletes, even though they have not got a pedigree, a consistency, or the aptitude and actually I think its detrimental to the sport going forward. I really do.

She rejects the notion that UKA is concerned with athlete welfare and highlights the dehumanisation of the committed elite sportsperson:

> I absolutely would say the well-being of an athlete has not been considered in many senses. I think actually British Athletics[22] is becoming a faceless company and I really believe that we athletes are just statistics to them. They are slowly removing the *personalisation* of an athlete and they are *forgetting* the beauty of the spirit of the sport and what can happen in a race. I think that they are making it all on statistics, all on science and not about what can happen in a tactical race (emphasis added).

These concerns also resonate across the field as Oscar, a teammate of Kira, who lost his funding illustrates:

> They set you targets, and they don't really negotiate the targets with you; they just set them. But if you look at my progression; every year since I've been competing, I've ran a PB [personal best] every year. So there's been a linear progression, which they expect to see again. And this year I was down a tiny little bit; a tiny little plateau and as soon as you plateaux, boom! *You're gone* …. its really bad (emphasis added).

Even when performance targets are met, exceeded, and medals won, the so-called objective criteria can be overridden by subjective judgements from UKA. Kira stated that though she was '…inside or above her performance funnel', the GB has denied her funding as her '…age-profile does not fit'. Kira's new coach, Marcus, corroborates these concerns, bluntly describing the precarious and temporary nature of funding:

> …it's almost like a burning platform when you get to a certain age. If you don't make the grade or progress, you get dropped.

These accounts illustrate the powerful influence that GBs have on athletes and coaches adding extra pressure to their relationship(s). These external factors can dominate the relationship, acting as a pinch-point where funding can be granted or lost, depending on athletic capital. This, to me, suggests that the power relationship(s) between GBs and athletes can be crucial in shaping, controlling, or

---

[22] The interviewees are relatively fluid in their use of the terms UK Athletics (UKA) and British Athletics. UKA refers to the GB for athletics in the UK and is a member of the International Association of Athletics Federations (now called World Athletics). The body outwardly re-named itself British Athletics in 2013 and is the consumer brand of UKA. The names are deemed interchangeable (British Athletics, 2020).

limiting career opportunities for both athletes and coaches. For athletes who are not regular championship medallists on funding life can be difficult, or in some cases, hasten retirement from the sport if they cannot support themselves. With such wastage from the sport, it is hard not to question UKA's investment policy into athlete development.

In allowing Kira the opportunity to recount her experiences and deconstruct her precarious relationship(s) with various actors within the GBs, I find it difficult not be affected by her frustrations and disappointment. She continues:

> So bearing in mind that I had been to a World Junior Championships at age 18, I've made two Olympic games, I'm five times British Champion, I'm a Commonwealth and European medallist and despite all of those repeated and consistent successes, I am still deemed as someone who is not appropriate to be supported. Because their support is dovetailed in one way only and that has to be from a high-performance coach in Loughborough, where all of the management is controlled.

[UKA] '…is just there just to invest in winning medals for Laura Muir!'

At the same time confident and articulate, but also cautious and thoughtful, Kira meted out unequivocal criticism of the system in which '…they haven't tried to support my talent because I'm not going to buy into their set up'. By not moving to Loughborough or taking up with a high-performance coach of UKA's choosing, Kira finds herself side-lined and overlooked by younger, but not necessarily faster, athletes. According to Kira, circles of power emanate from UKA to protect chosen athletes. Here, resources are invested in these favourites for their success providing support for the system. Nonetheless, there is a trade-off; athletes in this centralised environment are more easily socialised and controlled, compromising their autonomy and rendering them more docile. The organisational power that emanates from UKA demands a return in its investment.

To illustrate her outsider status, Kira proposes examples in which powerful officials have exerted influence in terms of selection for championships. For Kira, the notion of objectivity in the selection process is a fallacy and she muses on not being invited to run at the British Championships, despite achieving the qualifying time. She reflects that:

> …they clearly didn't want me to run the 1500m because I would be a threat to some of the girls and I would jeopardise one of their places for the Europeans. It's like a coordinated systematic attack on me, as I am not their favoured athlete.

A more significant example of interference and preferential treatment of athletes came in the retelling of the events leading up to the heats in the 2017 World Athletics Championships in London. Kira recounted that:

> The night before my race, myself and my fellow competitor were told that we might be changed into what heats[23] we will be in because one athlete wants to go in the second heat and that's Laura Muir. Can you imagine being told the night before your heat that 'actually we are gonna move you girls around because we want Laura to get through'. I basically kicked off after that because you're not supporting my mental health. They pretty much were saying that 'your performance doesn't matter as we've got an athlete doubling. We want her to get through as easily as possible and have the easier heat'.

For UKA officials to directly interfere in the administration of the IAAF seeding procedure leads me to question whether this could be framed as an example of institutional power at work in elite sport? I read this as a complex power relation between a domestic GB using their considerable prestige as an internationally regarded organisation with significant political capital and agency attempting to influence IAAF procedures. Thus, the circles of power and influence extend to even the start line-up, cascading a series of events privileging certain athletes and marginalising others.

---

[23] When there are too many athletes to run in a single round (final) there needs to be a number of qualifying rounds. Rule 166 states that athletes will be drawn on the basis of seeding so that the best athletes will be distributed evenly throughout the field. The aim is for the best performed athletes reach the final, but there may be some variation (World Athletics, 2020).

At this point Kira became eager to disclose a further example where she felt disenfranchised by the system. She recounted that she had just become British Champion and was approached by a UKA administrator asking if she was planning to go to one of the altitude training camps at St Moritz:

> I explained that I would like to go after the Anniversary Games in a few weeks' time and she replied 'Oh that's fine because you're not one of our priority athletes', and that was said to my face! I stopped and I looked at her and I said, 'I've just become British Champion and I'm not a priority?'

Perversely, athletes who had not made the British team for the European Champions had priority places on the camp and:

> …the interesting thing is talking to my peer Sabrina, was that she knew ahead of the British Championships that she would be going to altitude the next day. The difference for her is that win, draw or lose, she had that confidence going into that race of knowing that she can benefit from planning ahead. It's a false confidence, but its a strong confidence that they can get because the coaches in Loughborough are giving them a lot of support to say this is what will happen, this is the best-case scenario.

This exemplifies the privilege that some athletes inside the system have. Contrary to this position, athletes on the outside, like Kira, find themselves in power-dependent positions owing to a lack of agency and support from significant agents within the GB.

It is cold outside.

Aaron's story - a foot in both camps: managing the multiple roles of a split stakeholder

I join Aaron at the end of my interview sequence to craft a story tracing the dynamics of his twin roles within athletics, as a coach and as GB employee. As someone who is uniquely positioned in managing a highly regarded athletics squad and who has had a significant employment history within sports administration, I was delighted to be able to interview him. He did not disappoint. Our conversation covered a lot of ground, focusing on several power tinged elements of working within high-performance sport and how athletes, coaches, and key sports administrative players manage and respond to pressures within this environment.

Consequently, I have chosen the following subplots to illustrate Aaron's story, starting with the proposal that power can be positive and productive in the creation and development of innovative and proactive coaches. Subsequently, I offer that this pays forward with the coach forging dynamic, reciprocal, and positive sporting relationships via an innovative high-performance squad system of coaching. Third, for those working within high-performance sport, organisational power influenced by both medal stresses and regime changes appear to dictate jobs and positions leading to uncertainty and anxiety. Subsequently, Aaron suggests that this also impacts on athletes in terms of funding pressures and associated expectations leading to premature wastage from the sport. Finally, significant power asymmetries are played out in conflicts between young talented athletes on funding pathways and the GB in terms of their obligations.

Creative aspects of power and the developing coach

From the start of the conversation I was struck to the extent that power dynamics seem to permeate and effect not only interactions between people, but also influence the relationship between a person and the role that they aspire to. Moreover, I was interested in the cascading effect of power relations being productive. Aaron credited his earlier experiences to the Apprentice Coach Scheme overseen by British Athletics, and to his high-profile mentor within the programme. From his demeanour, intonation, and choice of words, he appeared eager to promote this positive aspect to his journey. Very quickly, he takes up the story, attributing the creation of his '…present coaching group and coaching environment to the successes of being on the Apprentice Coach Scheme and close mentorship', of his tutor. He continues:

> The idea behind the Apprentice Coach Scheme was that they weren't picking coaches, they were picking people they thought *could* be a good coach. I would shadow him and look at how he managed athletes. I was exposed at an early point in my coaching career to his coaching philosophy and *how he managed* athletes. This was a major influence on me, looking at the culture that he set (emphasis added).

This mentor had considerable kudos and cultural agency within the athletics world and neophyte performance coaches seemed keen to take on board his approach. Furthermore, after further reflection with the audio and transcript of the interview, certain words stand out. *The management of athletes* and *cultural set-up* are aspects that Aaron emphasises, not training regimes, drills, or practical approaches. From the start, it is the relational and social aspects of squad culture that Aaron seems to endorse. And he takes his lead from his mentor. This National Coach achieved multiple successes with elite UK athletes and, from his words, Aaron was influenced and guided by his mentor's practices, looking to mimic what worked.

He offers:

> Eventually, over time I started to collect a group of athletes and I tried to become a sort of mini version of him in a way – and then I found that kind of didn't work because it didn't truly align to what my true personality was. So, I felt that I had to be more true to myself, to my personality and to take certain things I'd learnt and seen from him, my mentor master coach and then put my own personality on it – a reflection of myself on it. So I evolved in terms of how I managed the group.

Listening to Aaron reflecting on his early development gives further support to the idea that there is no pre-requisite pathway; no convenient coaching template or model of ideal coaching that can just be dragged and dropped onto a different context.

Although Aaron did not refer directly to power, power was at work throughout our discussion. This is portrayed in the potent stories he related and interlaced with powerful language. To illustrate this, rather than feeling beholden or tied into a particular way of doing something, he seemed eager to keep learning and not to be satisfied with the level he was at. He muses:

> Something like three or four years ago, I wanted to be absolutely world class at sprints; I thought 'I got to get better at sprints'. So I spoke to my mate and said, 'let's go on a trip at the end of the season and let's go and speak to the four best sprint coaches in America'. So we rang them up, we emailed them, we pestered them until they agreed. Then we flew over to Texas and just spent time with them. We spent a week out there and it was just brilliant; almost life-changing as a coach.

I felt I was talking to a highly autonomous individual who was able to directly tap into what works for him, to experiment with alternative ways of doing and to seek out new opportunities for learning. To me, he appears to be self-empowered, always driving his development forward. This proactiveness, though seems to depend on a coach's willingness take responsibility for their own development. He continues:

> I had to pay for it myself. I got a little bit of money from England Athletics in return for coming back and presenting my findings, which was fine. In fact, it worked really well; it's about filtering the messages down, but that's me and my mate off our own back and not enough coaches do that.

When pressed further on coaching initiatives, he responds:

> I say to coaches, 'you can come down and see what we do whenever you want' and you'd be amazed at how few coaches take you up on it. I just find it bizarre; why wouldn't you? If I was a new coach and I saw the group that I've created with the success I've had; I'd want to go and see that person.

He contrasts this to the structured National Coach Development Programme (NCDP) in which coach initiative was downplayed:

> The fault of the NCDP was that they weren't creating innovative, independent-thinking coaches. The programme was very directive, very prescriptive and too classroom based. We almost did too much for people and they became used to it. So suddenly we've got lots of coaches that just don't know what to do. Which is the absolute reverse of what you want to happen. So, the intention was good, it achieved a hell of a lot, but at the same time there were fundamental flaws to the process.

I am reminded that docility can be an issue in coach learning, just it as can be for athletes engaged in overly prescriptive training regimes. I propose that the asymmetric relation of power between the developing coaches and the NDCP actively suppressed the coaches' own agency, resulting in their compliance. These are perhaps the unintended outcomes of a regimented approach, resulting in disempowered coaches who lack the confidence needed to forge their own communities of practice?

Operations and (re)productions of power in the high-performance squad system

As well as acknowledging the productive nature of power in influencing Aaron's coaching development, I propose that it is also central to the development of his present squad system. Rather than resorting to didactic tactics, Aaron appears to focus on reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning in order to create '…independent, free thinking, whole people'. To him, the notion of docile, passive athletes, wholly dependent on the coach, is anathema as he declares that the aim of coaching is to:

> First, to create faster and stronger athletes and second, a better human being. And that's a 50/50 split. So that includes other things as well such as being independent, being evaluative, being more self-aware.

I got the impression that rather than creating a hierarchical, disciplined troop, as has been explored elsewhere in this Chapter, this set up is based on shared responsibilities where power is subtly employed by multiple actors along a network of interactions. For me, Aaron shatters the old-fashioned view of the coach as always being in control of every detail (though he has used his agency to engineer this powerful squad culture in the first place). Here, he becomes quite earnest and animated in his delivery:

> For me, its not about teaching its about learning, so how are they best gonna learn? Sometimes they learn best by coaching themselves, sometimes more from their peers, from me or sometimes something that might be reinforced if I suggest it and their peers repeat it. So today you probably didn't see me doing any coaching at all! So I see myself as more of a manager than a coach now and this is also down to me having older and experienced athletes.

Athletes are required to actively contribute to each session. The dynamic appears to be learn by doing and regular reflection, which is a far cry from dictatorial approaches:

> For me, peer coaching is incredibly important. This comes down to the three philosophies of the group that they all buy into and hopefully creates a common bond. And they all reinforce each other. So the first one is they have to bring at least one thing to help others in the group every session. It can be as simple as providing motivational support, 'come on mate, you've got one more run, let's go!' to I've just filmed you doing a run and you're not pulling your knee up...' So they coach each other, they help each other, and the interesting thing is that they are in direct competition with each other...

Aaron has deliberately conceived a situation where athletes are inculcated into a powerful culture that provides support, education, and a vibrant atmosphere that appears to galvanise people. And yet, the powerful effects of intra-group competition also play out. To emphasise this point, I turn to a separate conversation with Quinn, a member of Aaron's squad for two years:

> The group is probably the best it's ever been right now in terms of people getting on and having the highest quality training partners; really fast squad members that push you on. If you're out there on your own its tough, but here you've got five other guys with you, spurring you on with your track reps or in the gym and you want to be up there, competing with them. I

think you saw that today and I think Aaron has tried his best to make those situations happen.

Two aspects strike me. First, the value that Quinn seems to ascribe to the squad relationships and that intra-dynamics are potent factors that strengthen the group, and, I would argue contribute to a sense of belonging and identity. Second, that the engineered rivalry creates a strong power relation between factions, maintaining the constant drive for improvement and self-assessment.

Subsequently, the talk turned to the practicalities and benefits of peer evaluation. When I ask about this, Aaron replies:

> Every two months we sit in a circle and we openly critique each other; we offer advice and tell each other what we think about them – and it's a really good way of getting stuff off your chest.

These accounts strike me in terms of the micro-politics of interaction; itself an intriguing area of modern power dynamics. I continue to speculate how this may be played out and if all members actually have an equal voice? Would not the most confident, extrovert members exert more influence over this kind of setting, taking advantage of their own power base? Or could it be seen as a deliberate ploy to give the quieter squad members a safe setting in which to offer their views? Either way, by co-opting the assistance of the whole group, the relations of power extend within and between all group members and their coach, increasing their connection and group coherence. Aaron continues suggesting that peer evaluation is quite unique to this group and so the operation of power works in novel ways, further rupturing the notion that power is only located within the coach-athlete relationship(s).

Although the squad is large at fifteen athletes, I infer that Aaron's approach works, creating a robust culture that he also attributes to having smaller sub-groups within the main squad. In his words:

> Certainly if I was starting off coaching and I hadn't established a really strong culture then it would be pretty much impossible to manage that number of athletes, but because they're very independent they recognise

that they can't be dependent upon me to be there all the time so they have to get on with it themselves.

Perhaps in focusing on athlete independence from him, but athlete interdependence within the squad, Aaron has achieved his aim in creating a group of mature, semi-autonomous, and questioning athletes. Indeed, he quips that '...since I've dropped my coaching input from six days to three days a week, interestingly the performances have improved!' To reiterate this point, Quinn again picks up the baton, implying that his open and honest relationship with Aaron allows him to question what they are doing in ways that other coaches, '...who are more power hungry and control freaks', would not accept. He continues:

> I'm an athlete who doesn't like being told what to do - but there is a time and place for it and that's down to people skills and just getting to know the athlete. Sometime in sessions I like to be told, 'this is what you're doing Quinn,' as it means I can just get on with the session, but in terms of planning seasons and stuff, I want an input in it - it's my career - I want ownership in my own journey as an athlete and he gives that to his athletes.

As with many people who are making sense of new topics, there is an element of contradiction and ambiguity in Quinn's words; he says he does not like being told what to do, but likes his sessions planned for him! I read this situation as being that athletes in this case are happy to relinquish some control to the respected and compelling coach as it frees them up to concentrate on their session.

Running the gauntlet of working within high-performance sport

Echoes in the transcript point to the role that increasing financial pressures, greater transparency, and changes in strategic function within GBs have made working in this industry precarious. As someone who has directly experienced these pressures as a GB employee, Aaron neatly summarises the situation suggesting that UKA '...has to be incredibly externally focused, as they are measured by medals – their jobs depend on medals'. Similarly, this brings to mind a previous interview with Ryan, an Athlete Development Lead for an HCAF (see footnote 11) who forwards the view that:

> Governing Bodies have targets to hit and funding is all based on targets - on high-performance targets essentially. If we didn't hit those targets, there would definitely be a drop in funding and redundancies would surely follow.

For me, this demonstrates the potency of performance-related objectives and how they tinge all aspects of sports administrative work. HCAFs or other GBs, like hundreds of other quasi-public bodies, are bound to the power of the audit and the importance of metrics can be linked to the commodification of the sport, the performance, and the athlete.

These employment pressures and overriding economic modalities of power affect budgets, strategies, and policies, sweeping up both coaches and athletes. I get the sense that Aaron is quite disillusioned with the obsession with medals, leading him to label it as '…myopic' and to question the efficacy of a system that has flaws. In particular, he appears critical of a process that although on the surface offers total support to good athletes, takes them away from their '…optimal environment and their personal coach who they may deem as not being worthy', breaking up a successful coach-athlete relationship in the process. He continues to suggest the environment that the athlete then finds themselves is not conducive, ending up with, in his words:

> …lots of athletes who become quite dysfunctional. So that's a big, big issue for me and for me its not a healthy system that we are in. I understand there has to be measures, I understand that medals is the ultimate goal, I get that its fine - it's a results business. I understand that if I didn't get medals for my guys, they'll all leave, but they don't. Very few athletes have ever left my group and when they do, they retire.

Paradoxically, these circles of power between the athletes and UKA may result in the medal successes that both parties desire, but where does this leave the '…whole athlete', that Aaron strives for? According to Aaron, the UKA's maxim of '…400m runner first, the athlete second and the person third', has it the wrong way around.

These concerns with targets and measures permeate through periods of organisational reform. Aaron offers that '…changes in regimes and dramatic restructuring within the organisation' also usher in changes, seeing some roles disappear completely. From our discussion, I learn that jobs that were once seen as permanent become transitory and I empathise with those trying to forge a career in this difficult environment. Aaron relates his personal experience of being made redundant from UKA for being in the wrong place at the wrong time with understandable disappointment resonating in his voice. Although I cannot be sure of his intention, I did not detect any self-pity, I just got the feeling that he viewed it as a missed opportunity. This Performance Coach continued to explain that his job loss occurred when the Regional Centres of Excellence closed due to a regime change at the top of the organisation:

> We decided there was going to be a one centre National Performance Institute in Loughborough, and they were effectively going to close down the other regional centres; still have athletics there, but effectively close it down as a British Athletics centre.

I offer that this move towards centralisation within Loughborough, for example, places external pressures on professionals within the administrative set up, limiting stability or career development. Aaron continues:

> So, because I worked at the centre, I was effectively made redundant and at no point in the meeting was my level of my coaching even discussed and the paradoxical thing here, was that I had my most successful year ever as a coach - and then I was made redundant, so it just doesn't make any sense. There no logic to it; I'd just come out of the Apprentice Coach Scheme, so I had been invested in albeit it in a different regime…

Ironically, Aaron makes the suggestion that being able to operate and thrive in this challenging work environment does not insure one against the prospect of being made redundant if the GB is restructured by those higher up. In this situation, political power that is invested in the GB overrides performance targets and negates any kind of control employees have over their own positions.

By way of contrast, perhaps conscious that he may be appear too critical, Aaron reflects positively on from his current role in England Athletics, emphasising the positives of working within sports organisations. At this point, he takes a breath, tilts his head and looks me in the eye as if to assure me saying that:

> We are actually in a good place at the moment. We are working pretty closely with British Athletics now, so things are happening – we [England Athletics] are driving the talent pathway and British Athletics look after high-performance. It's a challenge of two organisations in same business, but we are actually making some headway.

Too much too soon?

The conversation also encapsulates a common subplot to my vignettes, that of the politicised pressures of chasing medal targets. These external metrics circle back on athletes in the form of funding pressures which can result in premature wastage from the sport if performance targets are not met. In this sense, power is contextual and not absolute, but still has potent effects. Additionally, Aaron illustrates how this impacts on administrators and coaches trying to work within the system:

> What you have to remember is that people's jobs, livelihoods, families are at stake if they don't get X number of medals. So they have to be very performance focused, choosing the most likely person to win a medal to focus on. Some people will openly admit that this is the situation - but look, this is a high-pressure situation - we've got to get medals.

Resource allocation is focused on power where decisions have to be made on how best to maximise a limited budget. And these external pressures have consequences on the athletes who may be dropped from funding at any point. Aaron leans forward in his seat and lays emphasis to certain words, delivered in rhythmic speech:

> Athletics is the hardest sport in the world beyond *any*. It's the most *competitive*, most countries *do it*, you don't get paid a *salary*, you might get something from the Governing Body, but if you've had a couple of lean years, *that goes*. If you're injured, you don't earn *anything* (emphasis added).

We have to find a way of keeping athletes in the sport until their late twenties. Too many kids leave at 22, 23, 24 if they haven't 'made it'. Or they may have come off funding as they've been injured or consolidating. And this is a major concern - you cannot keep improving every year, it's just not possible, success is not linear.

Perhaps with the regular supply of junior athletes progressing through the ranks, UKA can afford to be choosy about who they decide to support. For me, this raises uncomfortable questions about exploitation, as the balance of power is clearly not in the athlete's favour. In addition, what is not so clear is how certain decisions are made about how performance targets are set for athletes, who makes them and why? I am reminded of Oscar, another of Aaron's athletes, who makes similar observations in Kira's story. In comparison, another of Kira's peers, Jason, is even more pejorative:

There's always odd decisions that are made about athletes and I think it comes down to the fact that people are in jobs who don't have the experience or knowledge to be making these decisions.

'Run fast, you are being paid!'

Weaving in and out of our conversation is the notion that athletes on funding are also subjected to other pressures and expectations, especially if they are not on an individual pathway, but part of the relay programme. Aaron evokes examples of athletes who are trying to manage the trade-off between individual success and medalling in the relay:

Ultimately, if you are being paid for something, they want something back, so there might be conditions or stipulations. For example, if an athlete is funded on the relay programme, their priority in the eyes of the Governing Body is solely on getting a medal in the relay.

He likens this situation to being part of the team pursuit in cycling where team medals are the sole aim. He also suggests how it is different because of British

Cycling's centralised system where they:

> …have all moved to Manchester, they're housed, they're fed and everything else. These guys are not; they're given a little bit of money and its is just enough to pay rent and survive and they've got their own coach, their own environment. But then within that, they're expected to compete in certain events, certain competitions as part of that relay programme.

As the priority is medalling in the relay, athletes are expected to compete in certain events and do certain competitions which is conditional to their funding obligations. This may be conflict with the individual athlete/personal goals where their choices are already made for them and they are frustrated by a lack of autonomy.

To give extra credence to this position, Aaron seizes on the example of an athlete in his squad who seems to have experienced difficulties:

> So there are challenges with being on the relay programme. Quinn for example, he had issues – when he first came onto the programme, he was a very good young athlete; he's broken all the records imaginable coming up through the ranks - suddenly he's on funding, brilliant! And they're expecting him to act, behave, do what they want, but there was no education around it. There was just this expectation that he needs to do *this, this* and *this,* but there was *never any education* on that and then he gets criticised because he's not behaved a certain way. But he doesn't know any different. He's not a bad kid, he's a *good kid* and then people get the wrong idea, the wrong impression. That happens quite a lot, so there needs to be more education around and solutions to being a high-performance athlete (emphasis added).

For athletes who are transitioning into the world of elite sport, the changes may be too great for them to process on their own without guidance from the GB. Left to their own devices, they may not always make the choices that the GB approves of, leading to friction and hostility. I am left rather unsure as to which elements of power are at play here, for the GB expects certain behaviours from athletes, but does not provide guidance on how to achieve it. Is this not indicative of 'over-caring' by the GB, which is about power, and yet it appears to shake off its

responsibilities? Though I have no idea what had occurred between Quinn and UKA, or how this was handled, Aaron seems to critique the culture of the sport:

> When Quinn reflects back on his career hopefully he can say that his coach was his number one person in his life, his family, number two, girlfriend possibly three. I don't think he'll have the head coach from British Athletics as a real integral part of his career and actually he feels like they are more of a hindrance than a help. I know a lot of athletes who feel like that but are afraid to speak up, because if you speak up you become a pariah.

From his words, Aaron conveys disproval of the way that issues may have been handled. If athletes are silenced into particular modes of behaviour or boxed into a corner, then the GB may leave themselves open to accusations of abuses of power. Aaron continues, describing it as:

> Not a good culture really; you can't speak freely and it's not a culture you can challenge in a positive way. I think in high-performance environments; you need to challenge.

If the current obsession with medals and targets stifles debate and closes off opportunities to feedback, how will the GB know how to move forward and what else may occur as a result of silencing athletes?

Maeve's story - once round the track: the fortune and fortitude of an Olympic athlete

I return to my conversation with Maeve after I have completed my fieldwork. By creating space in the research process, I have been able to re-examine and reimagine the data in several forms, its potential meaning and the various ways of being read. Similarly, Maeve, a recently retired track athlete has also had an opportunity to reflect on her career and experiences in elite athletics after a period of transition. I wonder how this new state of being may influence Maeve's thoughts, feelings, and responses offered?

Reacquainting myself with the audio and transcript, I am persuaded of an energetic, controversial, and mercurial individual who appeared to welcome the chance to talk extensively about her experience of being an Olympic athlete. Though I could have chosen from several elements to frame her story, I have selected the following subplots to provide a window into her world. First, similar to other athlete's stories, I argue that the changing nature of the coach-athlete relationship(s) is temporally located. To me, this fluid and evolving context shifts between dependence and autonomy and I consider what that might mean for the power relation between both parties. Furthermore, I offer how the coach-athlete relationship(s) in itself seems to be defined by its location within the extended network of other coaches, support personnel, and other athletes. Subsequently, this raises questions about the survival and longevity of the coach-athlete relationship(s) and the factors that disrupt the power dynamic leading to breakdown and dissolution. Fourth, I consider how the unique subtleties between coach and athlete appear to be underpinned by macro social factors, such as gender and age. Finally, I explore how the organisational context of funding structures serves to dominate athlete fortunes and opportunities, shaping or limiting careers.

Catch a tiger by the tail or a tale of when to let go

Like Kira before her, Maeve identified the changing nature of the coach-athlete relationship(s) as being related to its stage of development or evolution. I suggest that this shifting, time-dependant affiliation is never uniform, despite any apparent longevity, as it is subject to fluctuating social forces which are themselves related to agency and context. Maeve readily volunteers what her lead coach of nine years brought to the relationship suggesting that:

> I think it depends very much on what stage an athlete is at. For example, Eric's role at the start was quite different to his role at the end. So at the beginning he was predominantly the one who set absolutely everything and he was 100 percent in charge of absolutely everything I did, apart from my weights. Everything that was running related he did; he organised and planned the sessions for me so I could just get on and train.

At this stage of development Maeve needed the direction and expertise of a coach who was able to take responsibility for her progress as a promising athlete, freeing her from the obligations of making decisions and planning an effective programme. By devolving power to her coach, I got the impression that Maeve felt able to learn from him in return. The power asymmetries appear to be most pronounced at this stage, with the athlete depending upon and being led by her coach as they are learning their craft from a knowledgeable other. This nurturing element arose at the start of my conversation with Maeve saying '…it was very much that he guided me and sort of developed me in areas that he thought I needed'. She continues:

> …we have a very close relationship. He was like my track Dad (I can't remember the last time I spoke to my actual Dad). So Eric was very close to me and he used to always say 'you know what Maeve?' Or 'have I ever told you to Maeve?' And I would say 'yes! I'm your favourite!' Because maybe I was the only girl at the beginning, so I was always 'the favourite!'

Maeve implies that her coach played an important role in her life in addition to someone who could just make her run fast. At this point, Eric was cast into a role as a replacement father, which I argue adds additional complexity to a relationship already described as '…vitally important' to her sporting progress. To elaborate, it may add to the legitimisation of power whereby dressing the relationship in a paternal cloak further codifies and gives authority to the coach, but also validates

additional power dynamics within the relationship. The father-figure element manifests itself in the emotional support that Maeve feels that he provides. Here, she nods her head vigorously and states:

> I think at the beginning, very much so, because I was younger. I had just started uni, I had moved over, then moved back home and then started back at uni again. So he was always looking out for me to make sure I was ok.

Despite the potential for this additional role to further weigh the scales, Maeve does not appear to interpret this relationship in terms of dominance and subservience. Rather, I get the impression that Eric provided an anchor point for her, affording a stable point that she relied upon:

> It's never been like he was in an authoritative position and I was like the subordinate, it was very much like an equal, more friendship, family-based, but I realise with younger athletes the coach needs to be more like an authoritative figure, like a teacher. But it's never been like I've been his athlete, its always been he's my coach.

As someone who took to athletics relatively later on compared to teenage athletes, Maeve was perhaps less impressionable with a forceful character already in place. I read that there seemed to be a significant amount of flexibility within their coach-athlete relationship(s), demonstrating that not only can power be contextual, but also elastic. I speculate that if Eric was more heavy-handed, demanding more overt compliance from Maeve, would there be too much tension that would shatter their accord? Perhaps subconsciously Maeve takes advantage of the plasticity of the power dynamics within their relationship, testing her coach? I admit that I was deliciously shocked when she shares with me:

> I'm known to throw a bit of a hissy fit sometimes, if things start to go wrong and I get a bit mad, but then I've thrown it and then I'm fine. Or if I disagree with something. Sometimes if I wouldn't want to do a session, we would have an argument about it. I remember one time he wanted me to do a session and I knew it wasn't right, but my season was going so badly, so for about an hour after I'd warmed up I'd had a cry and I was too busy having a strop and everybody had finished the session and I said, 'you know what Eric, fuck it, I'll just do the session!' (laughter) And I actually ran really well!

These incidents appear to be illustrative of both athlete recourses to subversion and resistance within the power asymmetries of the coach-athlete relationship(s) and compliance once the performance is over. Ultimately, Maeve acquiesces when she has had her outburst – itself a display of power. Conversely, Eric as the assumed more powerful party, appears confident in his position as father/coach and permits these flare-ups knowing his athlete well enough to come round. Nonetheless, this is a far cry from Felix, an elite technical coach known to Maeve, who demands more tractable athletes seemingly within a less flexible power framework. He offers that:

> I'm the expert and what I know what works. I've spent 20 years honing my craft and if Reagan doesn't want to do my session or she if refuses to make the changes then she can find herself another coach. I'm not interested. I can make another Reagan.

Notwithstanding the above, the latter part of her career saw a different type of relationship develop with Eric, which illustrated the changing power balance. In this way, she became more experienced, driving the process more herself. She states that:

> Though Eric was in charge of absolutely everything at the start, his role changed to one where at the end - he was more of a facilitator. So I was the one who tended to say to say what I wanted and I needed, because I think the sign of a good coach is when the athlete doesn't need you, but they want you. So, it kind of changed throughout the time.

Rhizomatic power relations as an aspect of squad culture

In addition to being located in time, I suggest that the social context is also key to framing coach-athlete relationships. From Maeve's account, the influence of other significant relationships seems to have a bearing on how coach and athletes view and respond to each other. This repeating motif included reference to other coaches, members of the squad, and additional support personnel in influencing the culture. Though apparently very different to the squad system depicted by Aaron and Quinn, I saw a world tinged with camaraderie and jovial support. To me, these complex interrelations are reminiscent of a *rhizome* in which all parties are

tied to each other in an ever-changing, overlapping, interconnecting root system. The system is in constant flux with people entering or leaving the group, affecting its chemistry. New connections are being fashioned or new positions being established which are themselves representative of the changing power relationships that constitutes the squad system. These power-laden interpersonal relationships play out accordingly as Maeve mischievously offers:

> There is so much banter in our group, it's ridiculous! Like if someone's being sick and everyone's laughing at them or pointing. It's just like everyone is constantly taking the Micky out of each other. We used to make stupid jokes at each other all the time, which makes dealing with the session so much easier. If someone's lying on the floor dying of lactate, someone will say 'look Tommy's got his toolbox out, he's got hammered!' (laughter) You almost have to be a certain level of psychotic to be a 400-metre runner, to actually want to do that to yourself every single week. It's funny; we just take the Mick.

As a previous 400 metre runner myself, I find a certain level of empathy with Maeve's stories. I suggest that when Maeve and her teammates engage with each other in terms of teasing and mockery, power is enacted, leading to identities and positions being forged within the squad members. Through irreverence, these performances may paradoxically strengthen their bonds leading to the creation of a powerful and supportive squad culture. This can have additional effects as this powerful squad magnifies its potency, becoming visibly attractive to others. As Maeve offers:

> I think it draws other athletes in. If people have seen a good coach-athlete relationship and they see athletes performing really well it brings other people into that squad. So that's probably a good thing; people bring other qualities and we bounce off each other. In turn it helps improve performances of all, all across the board.

At this point Maeve becomes more serious and her demeanour changes as she reflects on how the introduction of just one person can disrupt the power dynamics of the group. As the *rhizome* adapts to facilitate the addition of a new member, new power relations take shape and flourish, whilst other connections

wither and die. She describes going from how they were all very social with each other to:

> …how the group that we had towards the end was completely different; all the people that I knew well and I trained with had left and there were a lot of younger ones coming in and that was good. But then there was a new girl who came in and I didn't warm to her at all. In a couple of years, it kind of came to light - it turned out she was just a complete bitch to everybody. She used to kick off, swearing at people who work down at the track, just causing a lot of issues and a lot of tension within the group.

The resulting discord seems to lead to misapprehension and distrust. Perhaps this new demanding athlete wanted much more than the group was prepared to give. As a forceful personality in the group, Maeve seemed to clash with the newcomer with new battle lines being drawn. She suggests that the changing context:

> …caused tension with my coach because I think I felt that I was being neglected. She would get all the attention, she would get everything and sometimes at the end of the sessions I wasn't even getting my times off my coach. So in the end I just gave him a notepad and said 'right, just write my time down and give to me afterwards'.

Maeve implies that she resented the new power-structure that relegated her to an outsider within her own group and this created strain between her and her coach. She continues that '…everything revolved around her and what she was doing and it almost ignored where other people were'. With identical warm weather training plans being produced and Maeve's requirements being subsumed to the other, '…that's when I lost trust in the process because it was not designed for me'.

Discord and dishonesty: confessions of a conflicted athlete

Despite upsets to the squad culture, Maeve always spoke very highly of her coach. There was a warmth and positivity to her voice that implied affection for Eric. I got the impression that she was indebted to him in facilitating her development as an Olympic medallist for she offers:

> He was very much a grafter, but he was very approachable. He knew how to do the winters; his winter training was second to none - he knew how to get you stronger; he knew how to get you fit. Whereas the technical side where you need to get race ready, he wasn't so hot on that, so I worked with another coach for strength and conditioning as well.

Yet it was his lack of structure that seemed to frustrate Maeve and she offers:

> He's very laid back … but, not in a bad way. I think halfway towards the end of my career when it was getting more serious, it was probably a bad thing because he was that laid back. I recognised that I needed more structure in my programme because I was then working with other coaches.

As Maeve became more autonomous, paradoxically, I read that she may have found being an elite athlete more difficult. I have presented stories of other athletes moving towards independence as a positive move or with a coach acting more as an advisor than a hands-on coach. These athletes seem to benefit from the shifting nexus of power relations, but for Maeve:

> I almost became my own head coach then and that's when it became quite hard to link all things together. My original lead coach didn't give me a plan of what we were doing that week and I would find it quite hard to fit all my sessions in and link them together so that they complement each other. So effectively I was the one who put my programme together.

I interpret this in the sense that Maeve may have liked a stronger input from her coach at this stage. Rather than trying to balance training requirements and designing her own activities, I argue that she could have best diverted that energy into the demands of being an elite athlete. Such are the difficulties and challenges of being your own helmsperson, for survival in this rarefied world is hard enough. To me, this exemplifies the importance of a highly skilled coach's input and influence in terms of shouldering some of the burden and taking responsibility for decision making.

From her words, I propose that she found herself a little lost and disillusioned in the later stages of her career:

> I think if you've not got trust in the process, in what you're doing, that's why things go downhill. That's probably what kind of happened to me in the last year and a half was that I was not trusting in the process. I was spotting things that I should be doing, and it wasn't right, and I think that's what caused problems near the end, because I sort of knew what I needed, but I wasn't getting it.

Her tone dropped and her facial expression became more pained as she described this episode. She spoke of her conflict of interests, of being loyal to her coach, but then not trusting the process and doing things without Eric's knowledge. As she was otherwise close to her coach, to lose confidence in him may have felt like a betrayal. Rather frustratingly for me, I did not follow this theme up in terms of investigating the role it may have played in Maeve's decision to retire from the sport. Did she feel like she had limited options, or could she not face having to start the long process of building such a committed and close relationship with another?

The influence of sex and sexuality on the coach-athlete relationship(s)

Towards the latter phase of our discussion, talk turned towards other themes and different contexts. Maeve's earlier portrayal of her coach as a father-figure could not be more different to other coach-athlete relationships she drew upon and this allows me to weave other stories into her account. Nonetheless, after a re-appraisal of the audio, transcripts, and analysis, these contexts appear to have certain things in common. Namely, they involve older, more knowledgeable males coaching much younger, talented female athletes. I was interested to see if the age and gender dimensions to these relationships impacted on the power dynamics between the parties.

To explore this, Maeve put me in contact with a fellow athlete who had experienced substantial difficulties with her coach. In our subsequent conversation, Tamsin portrayed him as unyielding and domineering despite the longevity of their relationship. She intimated that she felt constrained by a lack of choice and limited opportunities to go elsewhere, demonstrating significant power asymmetries in the coach-athlete relationship. She elaborated further implying that although she felt side-lined and marginalised, she was trapped and lacked confidence to seek alternatives. Though she emphasised his qualities and made an effort to present him as empowering and supportive at times, his mercurial personality made it difficult to predict his moods which could result in conflict or domineering behaviours designed to subdue and control. I propose that the way that young females are socialised into being compliant, acquiescent and conflict averse reduces their agency when interacting with men who are socialised into confident, assertive, or combative beings. The 'good girl syndrome' suggested here serves to render some female athletes docile as they endeavour to comply with social expectations of behaviour. For some, being eager to please, humble, and safe-effacing locks them into situations in which the balance of power is further tipped away from them. Reflecting on this aspect, I suggest that this docility associated with the 'good girl syndrome' may also be compounded by the notion of athlete docility as a result of disciplinary techniques enacted upon the athlete through specific training practices. If power is perceived to be tipped more towards the coach by virtue of them being the knowledgeable other, athletes may normalise the power balance rendering themselves tractable or passive.

Alternatively, several media interviews with Tamsin and the coach in question have couched the relationship in very different terms, providing an endorsement of the coach's methods. Here the coach is promoted as being central to Tamsin's success and presented positively. Reading these I am persuaded that there is an agenda that I am not fully aware of and there might be many ways to read these conflicting accounts. This is in itself a performance of power.

Eventually, a tipping point occurred, and Tamsin rebelled and broke away to work with Felix, a technical coach. It appears that resistance to power relations can be realised in a particular context. Her words and attitude seemed to celebrate her new coach's approach and skill set, demonstrating again the uniqueness of any coach-athlete relationship. From later conversations with Felix, he talks about giving careful consideration to coaching females in his group as has become acutely aware that gender dynamics may influence the coaching process. He places careful emphasis to his words, declaring:

> My strategy is *not* bullying. Because you have to be slightly maladjusted for bullying to work. If you're a woman who is broken or has an issue then bullying works, cos you *undermine them*, you make them do stuff, their self-esteem is low - you work on that as your *core fixer.* These can work but it will not get you to run your heart out in the 800m - it won't get you a long-term friendship or relationship. For me that's *just* as important (emphasis added).

It appears that Felix is very much aware of how gender can be a key driver of power asymmetries in the coach-athlete relationship(s). He presents a fierce critique of male coaches who seduce their female athletes calling it an '...abuse of power'. He continues, 'If your driver in athletics is to control - give up - you're there to empower'. Yet for a time he did not see gender as a potent intersecting dynamic as he seems to do now. He offers that he failed a supremely talented female athlete imparting that a greater appreciation of physiology and sociological context would have led to a different coaching approach:

> When Olivia announced that for the last five years that she hadn't had a period, I was floored, I mean who knew? If you don't know - if you ask the wrong questions, you get the wrong answers and vice versa and I just asked the wrong questions. Why would I think that she's not having periods? But it made sense, I should have guessed when her foot wouldn't heal...

Quite possibly I feel that either ignorance, delicacy, or awkwardness may have played a part here, clouding Felix's judgement and limiting his interaction with Olivia, as she battled with the female athlete triad by herself. Alternatively, I suggest that that power and knowledge interact with the production of dominant coaching discourses that serve to privilege the male body over understanding of

the marginalised female body. Felix intimates that he had to challenge his ignorance and seek new ways of knowing so he could better support an increasing number of female athletes in his squad.

Funding and (mis)fortune

Resuming my conversation with Maeve, our talk turned to external influences such as funding that can affect an athlete's career or fortunes. She offers the following insights into being a funded athlete:

> Obviously, the money means you can reduce your hours at work, or you don't have to work at all. British Athletics will bend over backwards for you; if there is an issue with injury or something then bam! They will have you in a scanner immediately! You've got access to the medical, you've got access to physiotherapists, dieticians, whatever. They will support you.

It seems that British Athletics are protecting their investments, ensuring that the athletes they back get the best support. This reciprocal arrangement is validated when athletes deliver on their performance targets, providing medals for the GB. Athletes and British Athletics are tied into a potent power-relation based entirely on the athletes' success. In addition, Maeve hints that to be a funded athlete for some is a badge of honour, or an acknowledgement of status leading to a construction of a powerful sporting identity.

For those athletes who do not make performance targets or get injured, the situation significantly alters as they are faced with a loss of financial support and may face challenges to their mental health or a loss of status. For many athletes, who have lost funding or have retired, life after athletics can be hard, especially when their athletic identity is intimately connected to their personal identity. Maeve offers that this is difficult to navigate and critiques the GB:

> Sometimes you are *shut out* …… yeah, like they [British Athletics] won't help you. I know one athlete who was on funding and she lost her funding through injury. But because they weren't supporting her through her injury it caused her loads of problems. She had her foot in a cast and was living in an athlete's house, but was told to get out. And she *couldn't* physically pack and move out (emphasis added).

Seemingly agitated and dismayed for her friend, Maeve continues:

> Also, they were giving her targets to get back onto funding and they were comparing her to Laura Muir and Mo Farah, and *excuse me*, these are world leading athletes, record breaking athletes. You *can't* compare her to these athletes (emphasis added).

Discussion of how hard it is for athletes to re-gain funding after losing it is a recurrent theme running through these interviews. Oscar and Jason assert that standards are set higher than an athlete's original performances and appear to be arbitrary. In a separate interview, Jason relates his experiences to exemplify the downwards spiral some athletes experience when chasing externally set targets. He talks about being injured, but trying to make funding, despite working through a rehabilitation plan:

> I tried again and again, and it was just the same story and I would say I haven't performed as well as I should have since. It was just race after race and it was so disappointing. I know where I should be, and I was nowhere near Futures or nowhere near any kind of funding. And that's the kind of vicious circle; I knew that I should be performing, so I put more pressure on myself which reduced my performance.

Holding athletes to these new targets exemplifies the power relation between athletes and the GB in terms of the athletes' actions being driven by ever-changing metrics. As a result, athletes may feel obligated to chase performance targets, regardless of their legitimacy, despite the mental and physical toll it exacts.

Steve's story - The People's Republic of New Balance, Manchester

The narrative that follows charts the story of Steve, an International ex-athlete himself and now the passionate Head Coach behind Team New Balance Manchester.[24] In the second story, Aaron suggests that a lot of quality coaching occurs throughout the UK in independent silos away from the increasingly centralised Loughborough-system and I wanted to explore this. In addition, as one of the first professional running teams in Europe and created as part of New Balance's global marketing strategy, Team New Balance Manchester seems ideally placed to investigate the merging of commercial interests, coaching processes, and athletic performance in the twenty-first century. In this way, we have not only influential others (Head Coaches, coaching or performance support, other athletes) affecting the coach-athlete relationship(s), but also other non-human agents (sponsors, politics, GBs, funding issues) which influence the environment in which the coach-athlete relationship(s) operates. What makes this story unique, is the degree of involvement that the sponsor may have on the coaching environment, the day-to-day life of the athletes and their careers. This innovative paring of sponsor and athlete in terms of commercial interest and athletic performance may demonstrate further opportunities to examine the interplay of social, economic, and political forces as an extension of the operation of various power modalities in elite sport. This aspect has not been investigated before as existing coach-athlete models do not cater for the interplay of these additional relationships.

As the Head Coach within this set-up, I was keen to gain Steve's perspective on how he manages this professional team and to explore the opportunities and challenges he, as well as the athletes involved, may face. As the conversation unfolded, I found him to be articulate, enthusiastic, and committed and assumed

---

[24] New Balance Athletics Shoes UK Ltd is part of New Balance Inc., a private American company sports selling sports shoes, sports equipment and sportswear. Team New Balance Manchester is professional running outfit created by Steve Vernon and Pete Riley with the financial backing of New Balance. This close paring of sponsor and professional running team in the creation of a specific training environment is relatively rare in Europe.

that you were just as interested in athletics as he was! In talking to Steve, four motifs seemed to stand out which are explored in the ensuing narrative. First, I posit that the establishment of a sponsor-endorsed athletes' house reduces financial pressures on young athletes, allowing them to focus on the business of being an athlete. Alternatively, this may increase the potency of sponsor power, creating a closer sponsor-athlete relationship. I suggest that New Balance may reciprocally benefit from this marketing ploy, boosting their image, sporting capital, and economic returns. Next, the social context of the house may provide an interesting examination of the operation of power in which the boundaries between training, living, and competing become blurred. I suggest that this influences the individual relationships between Steve and the athletes demonstrating change, negotiation, and compromise. This leads directly to the third element in which I propose that power is an intrinsic aspect of coach-athlete relationship(s) in transition. Finally, how the training environment, Steve's philosophy and being part of Team New Balance influences the degree of involvement that athletes have in their own development and management. I suggest that athlete compliance, reliance, learning, and (in)dependence are highly complex issues governed by relations of power which are problematic and difficult to disentangle.

Buying into the brand: life in the New Balance house

Similar to the previous stories, Steve spoke eloquently about the importance and influence of the coach-athlete relationship(s) from both a coach and mentor perspective. He seemed to recognise and value the social context in which these relationships operate and was keen to explore issues related to the New Balance house. From our conversation, listening to Steve speak at conferences and interviews online, he outlines the concept behind this set-up considering that in:

> …East Africa, some of the best distance runners in the world, they are all in groups, in teams and they work together. You look at the next best after Africa and that's the US. The US has a great collegiate system and if you are then at the top of the pile you move into a pro-team (Vernon, 2018).

This is a marked contrast to Europe where there are very few pro-teams, with Steve suggesting that this:

> …would be a great way to help people carry on their running career after university. We wanted to create a great environment that was totally about getting the best out of the athletes. A real performance environment (Vernon, 2018).

Steve intimates that for many athletes, continuing competing at high level athletics after university is not realistic, as social and economic pressures change the context in which the athlete finds themselves. For some, real life obligations of working, paying rent, mortgages or family responsibilities exert power on athletes who may feel unable to devote the time and energy needed to maintain high-performance. In contrast to these conflicting expectations, Steve suggests that by creating a designated environment can help athletes '…put their life on hold and takes the pressure off' whilst extending their competitive lifespan. In a separate interview, he elaborates further:

> So I suppose what we are trying to achieve at Team NB is this perfect environment, or near perfect, for young athletes to invest their time and take away the stresses of full-time jobs etc. So our guys are supported by New Balance in the athlete house to take costs away. We wanted to make it so people could train hard, recover and be a pro-athlete. This has proven successful across the world and we knew it would work if we got the right infrastructure there to create this (Vernon, 2018).

When questioned further on the financial aspects of the athlete's house, Steve was pragmatic about the effects it has on the athletes themselves; alleviating their financial worries and freeing up their emotional bandwidth.

In addition, alongside the sponsor picking up the bills, Steve is also keen to promote other positive aspects of the shared house. For example, he touches upon some of the beneficial features of the arrangement for the sponsor, disclosing that:

> The house is brilliant because it's a *marketing tool*, people love it – it's a place where physiotherapy comes to, massage etc., our sponsors love it and our partners love it and it *tells a story* (emphasis added).

This unique selling point may operate as a lure for aspiring young athletes to whom financial hardship is a palpable reality and especially for those who may have

missed out on GB funding. Athletes are attracted to the brand, taken care of, perform well and then act as a publicity tool for New Balance's marketing strategy. On this level, power flows between the agents involved, acting productively, as if in symbiosis. By boosting the brand's image as a 'caring' company with the needs of the athlete seemingly catered for, New Balance may have accrued considerable sporting capital by capitalising on their public image with this unique venture. The athletes are a way to a means. I get the feeling from Steve's tone that he is immensely proud of the athletes' house and although he doesn't specifically spell it out, I read that he offers this way of doing athletics as an alternative to the GB funding model, freeing athletes from their obligations to British Athletics. What it may do, however, is subtly bind the athlete to another master. Unsurprisingly, in his position of Head Coach, Steve endorses his company's outwardly philanthropic approach without deciphering other motives. In his words he offers:

> That's why we put the house in there because you can't earn a lot of money in this game unless you're an Olympic Champion. I mean we've got people who are Olympic performers, some have Lottery Funding from their Governing Bodies. We've got people starting out who aren't on anything. We've also got some people running for Great Britain who have made quite a good living out of it, but you've got to remember, it's not easy.

Notwithstanding the above, rather than just presenting an idealised view of the house, Steve appears sensitised to the challenges inherent in living and training together. The monetary aspect, though seemingly egalitarian, is more unequal, as the previous quote points out. Furthermore, there appears to be a large variation in the type of contract that the brand has with each athlete. Steve explains further:

> …some of them are paid, some of them aren't, they just get kit; some of them work, some of them don't - and that's a challenge as well.

Though I have no evidence to support this further, I get the impression that the different New Balance contracts, funding streams and employment patterns may influence how athletes perceive themselves and other athletes. If athletes like Kira, Jason and Oscar self-identify with being funded or non-funded, then I infer that each financial situation influences the self-worth, security, and social capital of the

athletes in the New Balance house. Here I suggest that identify formation and financial (in)security may interact to subject athletes to differing forms of power.

Train, recover, eat, sleep, repeat

> Endurance running; it's not glamorous. People don't see behind the scenes. You're managing a group of people who aren't in individual relationships, but are thrown together and some people get on like a house on fire and there's some that don't. There's no major issues, but when you're knackered from training hard, things grate away at you…

Steve's quote above points to the intra-dynamics of the house being an essential factor in the training environment; such is the frequency that he revisits this theme. These people have not elected to live together and so have given up some of their agency in order to benefit from the set-up. Steve indicates that tensions and occasional flare ups do occur, which I read as the enaction of situational power between individuals as they resolve conflicts or tensions. Interestingly, as their coach and team manager, I get the impression that he feels compelled to take it upon himself to manage. From the following he offers:

> I've had some challenges where it's not worked, I really have. They're older, more mature - they're not students. You're living with people who you're not choosing to live with. Obviously, the house is paid for, but I find that once they get to their late twenties, they find it challenging. The early twenties, it's great. There isn't a hierarchy because if there was some of them with big egos, they're going to rub each other up the wrong way like any house of… But it is like a family, there are going to be arguments and stuff and sometimes the problem is that they don't argue and then there's whisperings behind the scenes cos they don't want to rock the boat…

Perhaps Steve is being a little naïve with the rejection of ego and hierarchy not being elemental factors in intra-house politics. With highly competitive athletes chasing similar goals, I can appreciate how athletes could experience the house as a high-pressure environment, with each athlete having to navigate the fluid social construct and ever-changing mass of power relations.

For some, however, the pressure cooker existence is too much. I spoke to Jason, an athlete who had come through the New Balance house, who relates:

> I benefited so much from New Balance and Steve; I really can't thank them enough. I think it was a really good environment to do it in and to get to the next level, but it just didn't suit me, I guess. It is intense, but I think the expectations were that you ran and that was it; you ran and recovered. But that's something I can never really just do…

From our conversation, Jason was eager to demonstrate his appreciation for what his sponsor and coach provided, yet he was uncomfortable in such a '…hothouse environment' with its complex power relations, not just between himself and his coach, but also between other athletes. Interestingly, now he prefers to train alone. He also raises the issue of specific coach-athlete relationships being influenced by the many coach-athlete and intra-athlete relationships occurring in the same environment. These relationships are riven with power asymmetries between and within the group members and are never constant (thus demonstrating temporal aspects of power). They are magnified, negated, or destroyed by the scrutiny of others who may gauge their worth and their social capital within the hierarchy. According to Jason, this can have substantial consequences. He suggests that:

> …coaches might have a better relationship with a certain athlete and if you are very close knit then that can affect the way another athlete is treated. I find that in a lot of groups a lot of athletes are not listened to basically. If the coach has a better relationship with one athlete, then they will make the decisions and then you will be left to kind of jog through it. I think that can be a problem with groups…

With Steve implying that athletes '…directly vie for my attention' during training and other interactions, it does not surprise me that relations between the athletes can involve friction and contestation requiring diplomacy or compromise. It also provides further support for the uniqueness of each coach-athlete relationship that defies uniformity and text-book modelling.

Nevertheless, as I sit at my keyboard re-reading my words, I am concerned that I may have created a tempestuous reality where egos and tempers flare. This is perhaps an unintended outcome of trying to see where the power lies. Equally, as an outsider, I may be picking up on issues that the protagonists may not sense themselves. Such is the effect of multiple viewpoints or partial realities representative of a poststructural sensibility. In order to offer an alternative perspective, I infer from Steve that though there maybe potential for discord, the house has now moved towards a position of balance. He suggests that this due to his influence in managing new additions to the squad. This is in itself an additional expression of power:

> So I've been through all sorts with the athlete house – its never perfect – but when I choose somebody for the team, the other athletes have a say in it as well. Now my decision is the ultimate decision, but we'll have a trial period; somebody comes and spends three days with us to see if it works. And I say to them 'make sure that the athlete coach-athlete relationship works for you, but you're also part of a team. Come over, see the environment, see the team, see if you like them'. But I also get the other athletes' perspectives as well…

Yes, he may ask the house for their input, but given that his role is much more than an individual coach, he has the controlling vote. Power broker, conflict resolver, relationship expert, mentor, father-figure, friend, team manager and employed coaching professional. No wonder Steve invests so much of himself into making this project work; his livelihood also depends on it.

Need, nostalgia and negotiated relationships

The previous stories of Kira and Maeve made mention of the changing nature of the coach-athlete relationship(s) in terms of context, time, and situation. In this regard, Steve is no different and he appears sensitive to the fluctuating dynamics of role change within existing relationships and the initiation and navigation of new coach-athlete relationships. From this and other interviews in this series, I argue that power is at the heart of these processes. Furthermore, I interpret power in this way as is an inescapable social force that shapes our interactions, guides our values

and influences the way that we think about ourselves. Yet I feel that its operation is often just under the surface of consciousness and perhaps because it is everywhere maybe we do not always give credence to its potential, especially when its operation is subtle. Steve appears to think about his coaching practice and the effects that he has on the athletes around him. Whether he thinks in terms of it as a power-relation I cannot be sure, but he does reflect on his relationships with athletes and how they are an essential part of his repertoire. He offers:

> What I've learnt is that coach-athlete relationships at the high end need to be invested in. You've got to build a relationship of trust with them, you've got to bond.

Devoting time to developing fledgling relationships with athletes is a process which Steve suggests is vital for the development of the athlete. He continues:

> The emotional drain on you sometimes, you have their *career* in your hands, they may have personal problems and you find yourself in this fathership role as well. *And nobody prepares you for that*, so it's something I've learnt (emphasis added).

Steve implies that a coach's responsibilities weigh heavily on them as they are directly accountable for their athlete's development, performances, and, ultimately, their career. The committed coach finds themselves bound by relations of power to their athlete as they endeavour to satisfy their role. Athletes, by contrast just seem to have to run fast!

To exemplify the changing nature of these relationships, I draw upon Steve's involvement with Dan, an Olympic athlete who he has coached for the last eight years. He intimates that longevity brings its own challenges as athletes have to deal with the changing nature of their relationship, perhaps differently to coaches:

> I was his hero; when I was 25 and still running, he'd have been 15/16 and he aspired to that and he looked up to me. Then I became his coach and a friend – but I think he finds it difficult, because sometimes in front of the others, I can't give him any preferential treatment. I think he finds it hard because of our previous bond that he doesn't get me to himself anymore. I think he finds that challenging sometimes. He never says it directly, but I think he really values that individual time and would prefer them more regularly.

As Steve's repertoire and reputation for coaching grew, more athletes wanted to be part of his squad. New athletes coming in require more input which may have accelerated change in other relationships, such as the one illustrated. I get the impression from Steve that the transition to Team New Balance may have elicited a distancing effect on some of his athletes. Such is the influence and power of changing contexts. Despite the transitions occurring over a period of time, with each party shifting position and inhabiting different roles, Dan perhaps finds difficulty in accepting the new parameters which are brought about by events out of his control. He may look back to how it was with a sense of nostalgia which can make it challenging for a team that is always looking forward.

Running with the pack or striding out alone?

Throughout the conversation, Steve appears eager to substantiate his accounts with specific context and colourful examples. This has the effect of adding texture and detail, creating dimensions to his stories that are easily relatable. Notwithstanding the above, occasionally I am left unsure of meaning and I may (mis)interpret his words. Such is the nature of dynamic social interchanges. I go back to the audio to glean some fresh perspective.

Fast talking, knowledgeable, and personable, the recording creates a momentary version of Steve in my mind to engage with. Unlike Steve, I have the advantage of reacquainting myself with the intimacy of the account and the associated transcript, so my reading may be different to his. It also allows me to exercise considerable power within the context of research deciding which elements to seize upon and how to present the story. This becomes ever more pertinent when dealing with the complexities, discontinuities, and contradictions of entangled coaching issues such as control, co-operation, autonomy, performance, experimentation, strategy, freedom, constraint, learning and failure, all within a

power framework. How much input does the athlete have? How much influence does Steve have and is there a mismatch or congruence between what he says, thinks and does?

Going back to the start, one of the very first things that struck me was Steve's self-belief and independence of spirit. I glean aspects of his motivation and autonomy, perhaps exemplified as follows:

> Towards the end of my career my coach knew that it was 90 percent coming from me - and so it should be towards the end. You still need a coach I believe, but I think at 33, if you don't know what you're doing and you are totally reliant on a coach, I don't think your coach has succeeded actually. So I think over time you should be imparting knowledge, not so that you become redundant, but they need you less and you should know it by then.

Certainly this is an aim of coaching that resonates with athlete autonomy, learning, and decision-making. But I was curious, how much of this philosophy actually plays out in Steve's working practices? According to him:

> …we always have a plan and that changes if it needs to. I have a proactive relationship, not a re-active relationship with my athletes about their careers. We are always working back from the major goals and I think a lot of them quite like that and the fact that there's structure to what we are doing.

In terms of where the structure comes from, Steve imparts that for most athletes it's a 50/50 split. I find this interesting for on one hand it could be read as a cooperative aspect of a flexible relationship where the coach seeks input from his athletes, sharing the role, with both parties negotiating relations of power equally. Alternatively, this could be illustrative of Steve's ability to frame the relationships in terms of his choosing and requiring athletes to contribute is itself an exercise in power. He adds to this, indicating:

> I can't just plan it out solely by myself because it's based on their goals. I'd say 'I think this would be better for you because of this…' but if they really want to alter it, then I'll support them with that so yeah, its flexible.

I get the impression that athletes respond well to this input and Steve demonstrates an awareness of the perils of teaching dependence and making

athletes docile. He declares that it is important that athletes make their own decisions, think things through and formulate their own plan, but, perhaps ironically, he will not allow them to make mistakes. There is freedom with the power to choose, but perhaps the leash is tight after all.

These dissimilar positions are also illuminated later on as Steve entertains a more experimental approach in contrast to his planned methods. He suggests that athletes sometimes want to be told how best to run a race because it takes the responsibility away from them and they are not culpable if they do not succeed. He continues, '…some of them like it though because of security, because then they're not going to make a mistake'. To tackle this, he flips the scenario:

> So I now ask them first, 'how do you think you should run this?' Some of them would prefer me to give them the answer, but I challenge them; 'but genuinely, you must have thought about it, what do you think?' And I'll say, 'brilliant, brilliant – you've got it spot on', even if I don't think so sometimes. But see how they fare with going with totally their own plan.

When the stakes are higher, Steve employs different tactics and becomes more didactic. The more significant the competition, the more strategic the performances and so the balance of power alters with the coach becoming more potent. In addition, as the New Balance athletes move on the international stage, their performances are open to additional scrutiny as they are figure-heading a powerful brand. As Steve's position as Head Coach at Team New Balance is predicated on outcomes, he uses his agency to alter the power dimension to engender the best performances. To illustrate, Steve discusses how he produced two strategies for the new girl, Alaina, for the European Championships in 2018. Though she had executed an ideal tactical heat, it was unlikely to be repeated for even though she was '…super confident going into the final, Laura Muir wouldn't allow a slow pace'. He told Alaina:

> 'This is the way I think it's going to go - don't expect what you want because I don't think you're going to get it. Because you showed that two athletes don't have the finish that you've got and they're gonna try and run that out of you. You don't want to lose your sprint finish by chasing them because they're stronger than you'. And it played out exactly as I thought it would.

In response to this anticipated threat, Steve confides to me that:

> … so we had two plans; one where Alaina was going to be super-confident and one where we knew what was probably gonna happen and Alaina had to be ready for either contingences.

In endurance races where strategy is significant, young, keen, and talented athletes sometimes need more of a guiding hand. To me, this demonstrates that power is always present *in potentia,* to be drawn upon when the situation demands. Notwithstanding the above, this controlling aspect seems a way off the 90 percent input that Steve had himself on his own athletic practice. Such is the path that Steve needs to tread with fledgling elite athletes and fledgling coach-athlete relationships.

Lauren's story - branding, alliances and rankings: continually raising the BAR on funded athletes

I complete my series of five vignettes by drawing upon my conversation with Lauren, an Olympic field athlete and explore three coach-athlete relationships deemed influential in helping her develop as an international athlete. Furthermore, it takes into account the sporting, political, cultural, and economic context that infiltrates the personal, influencing her journey. Our conversation encompassed multiple aspects of the coach-athlete relationship(s) and Lauren gave texture to these elements, throwing these important dynamics into sharp relief. Moreover, discussion turned to exploring the wider power networks that surrounded Lauren and her coaches, providing additional context to the rarefied realm of elite sport. During our encounter, I gave Lauren the opportunity to give voice to her thoughts and feelings about how she navigates being a successful athlete on the world stage with all the interrelated complexities, pressures, and influences that it encompasses. Together, we co-created a rich and vibrant reality based on Lauren's stories and personal accounts that allowed me to live for a moment in her world.

Consequently, I will again try to recreate an aligned reality that gives credit to these stories by focusing on selected interconnected aspects. First, similar to the story of Kira, the coach-athlete relationship(s) is seemly ephemeral, unique, and context specific. It appears to be continually evolving, each alliance being characterised by individual markers. Next, I suggest that there is an intensity to the relationship between Lauren and her coach, Blake, that is directly related to its rank as a technical field event and different to those of track events. Third, I read that the government and politics of the GB may influence the status and hierarchy attributed to certain events and athletes and are instrumental in shaping polices and attitudes. Fourth, I contend that the funding of elite athletics plays a central role in influencing the environment in which the coach-athlete relationship(s) is

situated. Lastly, consideration of the branding and marketability of athletes like Lauren, prompts me to reflect on the influence of sponsorship, media profiling, and use of social media on navigating the contemporary sporting landscape.

Calling time or staying together?

In my encounter with Lauren, she articulated each of the three coach-athlete relationships in unique terms, denoting a multiplicity of meaning and influences that captured my interest and drew me in. She appeared eager to share her experiences and I tried to provide a platform from which she could scaffold her responses without inhibiting her. Throughout our conversation, Lauren intimated that each relationship had a temporal aspect to it influencing her transformation into an elite athlete and in her own words '…a more self-confident person'. Nonetheless, she appeared to attach different values to each relationship, weighing them up with a reflective eye. She articulated awareness of the significance of each relationship commenting that '…getting the right coach is absolutely the most singular thing you need to achieve your potential'. She continues:

> Athletes need to buy into the coach's programme for it to work. I think having the right coach for the right athlete is paramount for performance. Yet coaching runs its course - Claude was an amazing coach - I loved every year I trained with him and it kind of ran its course and I needed to move on.

Claude, Lauren's first coach, provided her with foundational knowledge and developed her from a promising teenager to her first Olympic Games four years later. It is, perhaps, here that the power asymmetries are most acutely felt, for at that stage it is the coach who is the more powerful agent and Lauren is totally reliant upon him to facilitate her development. Enlightenment came towards the end of our conversation when we returned to this aspect for she reveals:

> I think the reason why he didn't grow with me (and that was the reason why we ended) was because he was very stubborn. He felt that he knew enough, so I don't think being in a coaching programme would have helped him.

I read that there is a mismatch between Lauren learning and honing her craft and Claude being able or willing to keep pace with his protégée's development. This example implies a shift in the balance of power, but without a concomitant renegotiation of roles the relationship rapidly came to the end of its shelf life as Claude became less useful to her.

In the split that followed, an aspect that only struck me after was the suggestion that Lauren '…did not know what to do - I had nowhere to go and no other coach lined up'. Whether this denoted an independence of spirit, foolhardiness, blind optimism, or none of these things, it is difficult to tell. Notwithstanding this, I considered this to be a bold move and illustrates that athletes have options and are not always inevitably tied to stale relationships. This perhaps exemplifies that athletes have more agency and recourse to power than previous interpretations of the coach-athlete relationship(s) have allowed. Lauren takes up the story again offering that a conversation with another high-performance pole vaulter, Harvey, brought her in contact with an acclaimed international coach, Lex. Such was the draw of working with such a high-profile coach that Lauren followed him to America, sacrificing her base and much-loved family to further her career. She muses:

> It was really weird! It was an eight-hour time jump; it was so, so far away. In hindsight it was never going to be, but we didn't really think the process through completely. The idea was that we can base in America for our general prep phases (October, November, December and then April, May) but then in competition phase we'll base back in the UK and Europe.

Though keen to create a productive relationship, this was a relatively short-lived alliance as the price of working with such a high-profile coach ultimately became too much for Lauren:

> So the six months I was with Lex, it was led by Lex and Blake [Lex's affiliated coach] was just in the background. But I found Lex's programme to be just way too intense; I didn't like being out in America, being away from my family. So I made the decision six months after joining him that I wanted to be solely coached by Blake in the UK.

I got the impression that in removing herself from her roots and family, Lauren felt disempowered and lost. I feel that she may have found all the associated challenges and imbricated power relations of settling into an established working group difficult to master. In addition, Lauren was just another athlete who was expected to bend to established training patterns and working conditions. She contemplates that it:

> …was a very different relationship – it was very standoffish; he was there just to advise you. He would be coaching a high jumper over there and I'd just be left to get on with over here. It wasn't very personal – it was almost like it was too big of a gap. I didn't ever feel like I could ever have banter with him or share jokes – it was very different.

Perhaps this relationship is representative of a system which is vastly different to what Lauren may have experienced in the UK, where roles are more defined with a more rigid hierarchy between coaches and athletes.

'I feel like the pole vault has got to be the most intense, important coach-athlete relationship in track and field'

When discussing Blake, the tone of the conversation changed and Lauren demonstrably became warmer, meditating on this, saying:

> I feel like the relationship I'm in now with my current coach, is very much a much like a partnership. He doesn't dictate to me and I don't dictate to him what I want to do. The key to that kind of relationship is communication and honesty. Its more working together towards the same goal. What else? I don't feel like someone being a dictator and then someone being dictated to works; for me it needs to be more like a friendship relationship. However, there are boundaries, obviously at either end, but its more like working together towards the same goal and want to have fun and enjoy ourselves in the process.

From her choice of words and fluency, it seems to me that Lauren has considered what each person brings to their relationship and why it flourishes. For example, she describes how they are different characters, but complement each other and how they are both willing to compromise and adapt to the elite sporting

environment in order to achieve:

> I listen to what he says and he's doing everything he can to support to help me get a better performance and I'm doing everything I can to achieve it, so we've got the same goals. And that kind of how we work – we bounce off each other in terms of ideas and things like that.

This parity and intimacy are also reflected in Lauren's choice of words, 'partnership'. As Lauren has evolved in her athletics career, she professes that each of them brings valuable qualities into the equation:

> He's super organised, very excel spreadsheet – 'this is what we are doing as I've thought about this for a week', for example. The training programme, the sessions – are all taken care of and I'm just able to get on and perform and not have to worry about having to plan and prep sessions.

Lauren appears willing to leave the minutia of schedules, drills, exercises, training sessions, and recovery tips to Blake, freeing herself to focus on competing at the highest level. I receive the impression that Lauren derives a confidence in this, devolving elements of power to a trusted individual who makes decisions on her behalf.

Rather than being dictatorial, however, Lauren talks of merging assets:

> …where I've relaxed him a bit. I've brought him to a happy medium where he is still super organised, but he's not over the top and I'm not so blasé with where I was as he's made me more organised, more driven compared to what I was. So we've merged assets and our weaknesses have been neutralised.

In lieu of having to bend to a rigid programme, Lauren and Blake affect each other. I get the impression that terms are continually being negotiated and compromises made in energetic exchanges that I consider to be representative of a powerful and productive alliance. Furthermore, Lauren suggests that the intensity of this relationship is a direct function of the nature of the event being so specialised and fraught with danger. She continues:

> It's the most technical of all track and field events. Other events might argue that, but I definitely think it's the most technical. You've got so many variables, to wind, how the poles respond on the day, how you are feeling on the day, the list goes on. Even if just one of them is off, your performance is compromised.

According to Lauren, this is where the coach's eye can make such a difference, influencing tactics and changing the course of a competition. The feeling I got from Lauren was just how much she relied on Blake, who by accessing his considerable knowledge and agency, is able to exert influence, creating potent and powerful conditions within the event. At this point, she took care to explain this cohesiveness and dependence can sometimes be mistaken for a lack of autonomy. But for her:

> Pole vaulters are pretty much the only athletes who travel with their coaches because he can have a big impact on each jump I take. It's really much a partnership thing; he gives me extrinsic feedback and I've got intrinsic feedback and that is very different to any other event.
>
> It's the only athletics event where people have died doing it, apart from the marathon, because of equipment failing, or variables being off, and you end up killing yourself.

In this way, hazards inherent in the event necessitate a more hands on approach as Lauren depends wholly on her coach's judgment and advice at critical moments; not just in terms of her performance, but also her safety. In a separate conversation, Ryan, an Athlete Development Lead for an HCAF, supports her view:

> Pole vault coaches need to come into the arena with their athletes as they need to give feedback there and then. It is vital for safety, for manipulation of centimetres on the run up, the take off. I do think that there is a feeling that pole vault athletes rely too much on their coaches, but I was a decathlete, I did the pole vault and *I know* the dangers. You need to know your coach is watching you to give you nuanced feedback and that's the difference between you clearing the bar or breaking your neck (emphasis added).

As a result, these alliances are not only located in time and space, but are linked to the modality of the event, adding new layers of meaning and significance that are fundamental to how Lauren and Blake conduct their relationship. The closeness that is produced from the highly technical nature of field events perhaps sets them apart from other track coach-athlete relationships. Not all elite coach-athlete relationships are the same and, I would argue, this uniqueness causes them to be treated differently and not in a homogenised fashion.

'Didn't he phone you?'

At this point the conversation shifted to encompass a broader view of athletics, including pole vault's standing in the sport and the interrelated mercurial politics and policies of the GB. Like Kira, Lauren is pragmatic about the purpose and culture of high-performance sport, which in her words is about, '…getting medals at the top and their aim is to facilitate us to achieve those medals'. Yet, she hints at the difficulties she feels in living in this high-pressured world where she is obligated to deliver on those medals to the exclusion of all else. She laments:

> Don't get me wrong – it's *amazing* being an elite athlete! When it's going well and you're at the top of your game, it's really good – but when you're someone like me who's had a lot of injuries, a lot of funding worries last year, it's really difficult because I particularly get the impression that it's *all* about medals. I finished fifth in the Olympics and nobody from British Athletes even cared; nobody even said, 'well done' (emphasis added).

I contend that this is a missed opportunity on the part of the GB. A phone call takes seconds and can have significant productive effects on the recipient, emphasising their worth, recognising their contribution, and maintaining their motivation. To fail to do so, emphasises the divide between athletes and the GB compounding Lauren's frustration as she narrates:

> I very much get the impression that socially and emotionally we are treated like a piece of meat that has the potential to win a medal, but as soon as you've gone off the boil, even a little, then they're not bothered.

Furthermore, Lauren highlights the hierarchical discrepancy between events suggesting that UKA are more interested in established track events where there is a British tradition, rather than field events:

> I never get phone calls from British Athletics asking me how its going or when's your next comp? It seems to me there's an invisibility when it comes to the field events and how they are treated, especially being a female pole vaulter. I very much feel its different for sprinters as I've got friends who are sprinters and they're like, 'Oh no, Neil Black rings me, he asks how I am'. And I'm like, 'I don't get it; I'm ranked higher than you'. There are huge differences whether you're male/female or whether you're track or field.

This is indeed a power-laden issue on two levels. First, not to be on the receiving end of a phone call from UKA illustrates a lack of care or concern from your representing body that compounds the power asymmetries inherent in elite sport. Furthermore, I argue that if athletes like Lauren do not feel valued by people in powerful positions, it can contribute further towards their objectification and representation as commodities. Second, this seeming disregard for certain events has wider repercussions; by valuing and validating media and TV friendly track events over field events channels resources, capital, and people away from certain events, privileging others. It is here that Lauren pauses and appears more thoughtful, giving emphasis to her words:

> There's a *real lack of coaching* in the UK. And that's the most direct thing that is linked to athletes improving their performance, especially in the field events. There's a lot of sprints and endurance coaches that are employed and I feel like field events are relegated and aren't considered as much. This is a mistake because in my opinion the field events are where we can *really compete* with the rest of the world (emphasis added).

'How high do you want me to jump?'

Lauren (like other athletes on the WCPP) is able to increase her economic power, allowing her to focus on training and performing and remove a source of anxiety in the process. Perversely, because she is able to support herself from sponsorship and competition earnings, she gets '…means tested out of a lot of my funding'. I feel that there is another issue at play here, for Lauren repeatedly mentions the devastating effect of injuries and hints at the associated negative impact on potential earnings they symbolise. Like other athletes in her position, she walks along a knife edge, knowing that a serious injury could spell ruin for her.

As the conversation progressed, Lauren went on to introduce me to another issue that is creeping into the politics of funding and that is the adoption of clauses into contracts. Lauren remarks:

> The thing that annoys me with the whole funding issue is that British Athletics have recently started putting clauses in saying, '…if you don't do this you won't get funding'. I had a clause last year stating that if I didn't medal at the World Champs then I wouldn't be retained on funding even if I made all the other requirements. It isn't fair because in pole vault you could be in the best form of your life and it just doesn't go right on the day – and to put someone's life on that which is funding – I feel like that's a bit harsh.

Perhaps by adding another layer of bureaucracy to the funding process, the GB is increasing its hold on athletes and subjugating them to further financial controls. I suggest, however, that a more pertinent reading of power at work in this context relates to the conduct of one's conduct. Every time the GB changes the criteria of funding, it reinforces the asymmetric nature of power relations *and becomes expected*. Forever changing the terms of funding normalises its operation and reduces its potency.

The power of self-promotion, sponsorship, and social media

At times considered and thoughtful, but always purposeful and articulate, Lauren appeared keen to offer her measured perspectives on the culture of high-performance athletics in the twenty-first century. In the latter third of the conversation, discussion turned to the socio-economic issues of sponsorship and marketing when Lauren implied that there was sometimes a difficultly in accommodating the demands of their training and fulfilling their obligations to a sponsor. She substantiates this by suggesting that:

> Yeah, it's hard to balance that because I'm working with SPAR[25] at the moment and they want me to do a one-off appearance at the other end of the country. So that's three days where potential training is compromised and I understand that coaches get frustrated, because their job is to make sure athletes are performing right and they don't see anything else.

---

[25] SPAR (SPAR [UK] LIMITED) is a supermarket company owned by Spar Food Distributions Limited, a Dutch multinational franchise.

Juggling multiple duties can be arduous, but Lauren is pragmatic. She confesses that this was a source of tension with her first coach, but Blake '…is really accommodating because he understands the extra things I need to do'. The importance of these extra duties are considered critical to increasing Lauren's media profile and maintaining her market value, yet at the same time she appears wary of such activities and the commodification of athletes. She expresses concern over the power of the consumer in engaging with social media and feels the tensions and unease at being required to maintain a certain online image. She continues:

> It's really difficult being an athlete of this generation because its so important as an athlete to maximise your visibility. I've got 57,000 followers on twitter and that's really useful for me in attracting sponsors and things like that, but over the last couple of years I've taken on maybe two month's break from social media because it just gets so intense.

I see the tension in her face and hear the emotion in her voice when she talks of dealing with negative backlashes against her performance or appearance and it is hard not to feel empathy with someone who is compelled to live so visibly in the public sphere. She muses:

> I wish I could just delete social media altogether, but being an athlete you can't, because that's one way to reaching out and getting yourself out there and known and I think it's getting more and more important, the posts you do.

With the ever increasing use of social media, and the blurring of traditional media, athletes are enveloped in the all-consuming public gaze of the Synopticon. The power of the consumer drives the process, specifically with the consumption of the female athlete in which the sporting body is a sexualised body.

By co-opting the assistance of social media, Lauren reflects on its cost, weighing up its benefits and limitations. By engaging with the online world, public gaze is problematic and complex as she appears to resent the obligatory requirements of posting regularly and keeping her profile visible and glamorous. Lauren draws comparisons with other athletes who invest more of themselves in creating valuable and compelling online personas resulting in a more potent media

presence, attracting the attention of market forces. These self-promotional efforts have paid off, as Lauren muses:

> There's people in athletics who are definitely earning more money, definitely earning more sponsorship than I do and have nowhere near achieved the same level that I have.

Yet she remains stoic and does not come across as bitter, shrugging her shoulders, perhaps hinting that she does not feel comfortable using her sexuality as a vehicle to sell a particular image of herself. I have to admire her for this, but wonder if by sticking to her principles she may be missing a trick? By playing the internet game, high-performance athletes can generate interest, cultivate a following, and develop a brand that provides a multi-layered dimension to themselves as professional athletes, creating an arsenal of economic and social power. Yet Lauren rejects this, indicating that:

> I want to be acknowledged for my performances and my performance level and I don't want to be posing in a bikini and getting 40,000 likes; I'd rather be winning the Olympics and putting a picture up with me and my medals and getting 40,000 likes.

The self-promoting element seems to aggravate her as she feels compelled to tie herself to the disciplining tool of surveillance and public gaze, preferring her performances to speak for themselves. Yet Twitter and Instagram will not be sated by plucky tales of performances, or action shots of sheer breath-taking athleticism; they demand and swallow whole sexy, sassy sportswomen in bikinis replete with scathing whit or effortless charm. It seems to me to be an irony that in our charge to be autonomous, free-thinking enlightened beings, we have tied ourselves to the invisible social forces of self-discipline and self-promotion.

Concluding remarks

As I move into the latter stages of the thesis, I look back over my data Chapter and reflect on the field of play. This sequence of stories has been challenging and no less intriguing. Lifting the lid on elite athletics has revealed a Pandora's box of surprises and a kaleidoscope of colour. I was regaled by tales of triumphs and tribulations, the mundane and the salacious, as well as the successes and failures of my interviewees. Of course, not everything was presented in such binary terms and several accounts may have alternative readings that may challenge or support in varying degrees. The readings that I offer are located in time and space and give some insight into the operation of power in elite athletics.

Coming into the field as an outsider might have seemed like as disadvantage at the start, however, I was able to take on board Thorpe and Olive's notion that one of the benefits of outsider status is that it may confer '…a critical distance in observing a field' (2016:130). In this sense, I was able to question taken for granted assumptions about practices and processes such as selection politics and funding structures. Perhaps one reason why I consider Kira's story to be so compelling is that I was able to use empathy and curiosity centred questions that seemed to appeal to Kira's story-telling sensibilities. By being an active listener, I felt that I was acting as her co-conspirator in encouraging her to craft her narrative, but equally I was aware of the performativity of the interview in its emergent form and the effects that each of us had on the other (Schostak, 2006).

In a similar vein, being aware of the constantly changing terrain of the interview and taking on board Rubin and Rubin's (2005:14) perspective on interviewees as '…conversational partners', impressed upon me the value of creating a positive rapport as seen in Aaron's story. Spending the afternoon with Aaron and his squad was a privilege. Seeing their set up, talking to athletes and Aaron alike was enlightening and I really felt that I had experienced an exceptional

high-performance environment. Throughout, I have attempted to see where the power lies and how it is enacted within and between these complex relationships and interactions. Equally, reflecting on this encounter and (re)reading my fieldnotes in the crafting of this story, causes me to consider Amis's (2005) emphasis of the emotional investment that each party brings to the interview encounter.

As a thread that weaves through all my accounts, I am cognisant of the complexities and craft of interviewing that encourages me to take responsibility for the quality of the encounter. I was fortunate to conduct my interview with Maeve very early on in my fieldwork and it served to increase my confidence and experience of interviewing in a safe space. As someone used to being interviewed, Maeve was able to conjure up a plausible account of what it may mean to be an Olympic athlete and I drew upon my social and professional skills as an educator to guide the process. I believe that the encounter also benefited from us sharing common characteristics such as gender, geographical location, and class, but also points of interest such as competing in the same event and having a similar professional background (Oakley, 1981). I tried to build on these commonalities to establish a rapport and create a vibrancy in our conversation. If I had not been marginally successful, Maeve would not have introduced me to her team-mate to progress to another interview.

In contrast, not all interviews seemed to flow as easily as Maeve's encounter. Though interviews are never easy or straightforward, I was challenged when I interviewed Steve. Not only were there difficulties in recruiting him (I had spent 11 months attempting to do so and it was a struggle to align diaries), but also because I was unwell at the time. Postponement was not an option I felt open to me and I was also adamant to conceal it as I wanted to match his energy and enthusiasm. The emotional and cognitive drain on me when conducting interviews is substantial at the best of times and so I was conscious that my health might have affected my

performance (Smith and Sparkes 2016c). Steve, however, was an ideal interviewee in these circumstances, for he needed no extra encouragement or more adroit handling on my part. He was open and articulate and seemed eager to present his perspective – yet I am conscious that it may not have played out so well had I been faced with a more taciturn participant.

I complete the storied section with Lauren's narrative. Like the others, I feel that it makes compelling reading as it is brimming with stories, insights, and emotions that attract and hold my attention. In attempting to recreate elements from the conversation and translate them into a written form, I have had to select snippets and examples that I hope represent the operations of power from a personal perspective. I am also mindful that in doing so, I join with Richardson (1991; 2000a) who acknowledges that I, the interviewer, am subjecting the interviewee (Lauren) to a form of power – that of the researcher in crafting a narrative that she may or may not recognise. What I am aiming for is a trustworthiness and plausibility that resonates with readers (Burnett, 2016). In this way, by acknowledging the personal in the political, I hope to shine a light onto the workings of power, co-opting Lauren's help in the process.

Having discussed some of my reflections on the politics and processes of engaging with interview participants and the struggle to bring these stories to the page, I will now move to the final Chapter. I begin this episode by exploring my apprehensions of bringing my research to a close and the tensions inherent in making claims for my research whilst being mindful of knowledge as subjectively created, fragmented, and incomplete. Such are the difficulties of remaining loyal to a postmodern and poststructural approach. Furthermore, the section that follows relates to the present data Chapter in terms of exploring both the explicit and implicit questions that my research raises, together with considering future directions.

CHAPTER IX – POWERING INTO THE FINISHING STRAIGHT

Changing gear

To call this this the 'Conclusion Chapter' would be at odds with the sensibilities and claims of postmodern and poststructural research (Rosenau, 1992). For myself and others taking such an approach, research is never truly completed and there is a marked difference between finishing a thesis and providing a conclusion to the research (Alvesson, 2002). Instead, this section brings together and concludes this stage of the PhD process insomuch that it is a final Chapter of this thesis. There is perhaps an irony in claiming these positions and applying postmodern thought and poststructuralist anxieties about structure, language, and the nature of text if the structural conventions of writing a thesis are rigidly applied.

For Walcott (2001), this means that we can never claim a final set of positions that provides a definitive set of answers to the research question(s) or research aim(s). I find that the relationship between a research aim and the discussion is difficult to reconcile with a conclusion because an absolute relationship between the research questions(s) and data for a PhD is a falsehood. There can be no such finalism for postmodernism owing to its temporal, mutable, and contextual implications for data, its meaning and knowledge creation (Schostak, 2006). The best I can offer at this point is to suggest, along with St. Pierre (2011), that this is what we think the data could mean from a variety of interpretations at this moment, in this time. Or as Rosenau puts it '…to "locate" meaning rather than to "discover" it' (1992:8). This is how I think the data could be construed and offer a reading based on my intra-subjectivities, the multiple voices of the research participants and the framing of the data in reference to the research aim(s) (Alvesson, 2002; Richardson, 2000a).

Reviewing the arena and locating meaning

Working with the workings of power

The end Chapter also suggests a point to which all my research endeavours have been indicating towards – a bringing together of what may be legitimately claimed, creating a summary position. Whilst I consider the aims of the research to have considerable significance, it is the politics and process of doing the research that has also seized my attention for:

> There may have been a danger of getting so captivated by the methodology, principles, challenges and pitfalls of the research endeavour that I may not have had space to devote to the actual process of dealing with data, suggesting ways that it could be read. There could be two PhDs in these pages! (Reflexive Journal, October, 2019).

Therefore, I return to the original aims initially posed at the start of the thesis and consider them in reference to my Method and Methodology and Data Chapters. This marks an ongoing and necessary iterative process, working back and forth within the data, but trying not to separate out the different phases of the research (Alvesson, 2002; Wolcott, 2001). It is here that I am mindful of the double subjectivity of power both as a consideration and as a vital part of the process of research. As I write this Chapter, I am reminded of writers who have emphasised the significance of researcher agency and power in the investigative process, where:

> Power is not located in one place, institution or person, but like the social, is constantly reinvented through the accounts generated through the research process (Westwood, 2002:3).

The creative connotations of power are quite compelling. Rather than this being a Chapter tagged onto the back of my research, I have been mindful of what it might mean from the start.

Race tactics and running for position

To reiterate, my interest in the social manifestation and operation of power has been sharpened by the process of thinking, doing, and writing about coach-athlete relationships in elite sporting systems in the UK. In taking a broad qualitative approach, with poststructural and postmodern positions, I have learnt that these significant, complex relationships appear to be located specifically in time and space, where context is key. My research leads me to postulate that power-relations are not only potent, shifting, interpersonal phenomena, but that the coach-athlete relationship(s) itself is situated in wider, overlapping, encircling power networks, and subject to organisational dominant discourses and regimes of truth. As my series of sporting vignettes imply, these influences are not just limited to behaviour, but they also implicate themselves throughout the cultural setting with physical, developmental, political, and economic ramifications for both athlete and coach. Furthermore, as I move between the literature, philosophical positioning, methodology and method, stories from the field, and other elements within my thesis, I consider how these and elements of my research notes, fieldwork logs, and reflexive journals have impacted and still impact on my research. The thinking, reflecting, and constantly evaluating what it might mean haunts me. Being in constant dialogue with the data I have co-created with others is suggestive of looping hermeneutics; moving forwards, backwards, crossways circling and twisting (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018). The outcome is that I am constantly challenged and will continue to be in considering how each story or element might contribute towards collective understandings of data. These postmodern considerations of meaning being contextually and temporally located simultaneously excites me as to its potential for new readings, yet frustrates me in that it never truly finished.

At this point, I return to the specific research aims:

RA 1 - To contribute to the understanding of sports coaching being a contested enterprise, a negotiated arena where parties use power, dependence, cooperation and collaboration to define, challenge and re-define their relationship(s).

RA 2 - To examine the intricacies of the coach-athlete relationship(s) from a sociological perspective, through which to seek to understand how coaches and athletes negotiate power relations. Specifically, to investigate physical culture in high-performance sport and how power manifests itself in training practices, perspectives and politics.

RA 3 - To probe existing models of the coach-athlete relationship(s) by moving conceptual understandings away from it being a binary, personalised and fundamentally closed relationship. In doing so, this research will explore the power exercised by GB systems, funding agents, sponsors, athlete system managers, selection committees, and other stakeholders as it relates to the coach-athlete relationship(s).

Though each of the research aims require reflection and analysis, to separate them out into clearly defined sections is perhaps artificial and discomforting as there may be a contradiction in declaring a poststructuralist approach and using the structure and traditional conventions of a thesis. Conventionally, though I may work systematically through my research aims, I shall apply a certain fluidity intending to generate a fuller, more integrated reading of my data and methods. I consider that aspects of my research aims permeate and reinforce the others allowing a multi-layered, textured, and wider view of the operations of power in the elite coach-athlete relationship(s).

Consequently, my intense, extensive, and all-consuming introduction into the (disorientating) postmodern world and the challenging of applying poststructural theorisations, leads me to incorporate my researcher self as a sensitising lens (Richardson, 2000a; 2000b; Schostak 2006). Equally, I must try to follow my DoS's advice when he joins with Bush et al. (2013) and Jones (2012) in exhorting sports coaching researchers to '…be brave and look beyond the obvious when conducting coaching-based research and engaging in the analysis of data' (Taylor, 2014:181).

Translating the field of play

By presenting my series of five vignettes as illustrative of the operations of power, rather than representative of all coach-athlete relationship(s), I have endeavoured to celebrate their uniqueness without assuming generalisations (Rosenau, 1992). In addition, I am not presenting these stories as evidence, but as windows of illumination. Though each coach-athlete relationship is dependent upon context and situational spheres of influence, I hope to show how my findings might provide transferability beyond the research setting (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Explicit responses to research aims: tentative reflections in action

So how far has my research gone in meeting these tripartite aims? Moreover, does it answer the following questions: is my research fit for purpose, does it actually bear up to academic scrutiny, and can I claim quality, novelty, and rigour? I have made some bold statements at the start and the ensuing sections will explore these explicit aspects central to my study. Furthermore, the reader may be wondering why I am keeping to broad aims rather than creating clearly delineated research questions with defined boundaries. Rather than limiting myself to a narrow focus, I had hoped to keep my agenda more fluid and encompassing. I was concerned that if I crafted a too tightly controlled thesis, I would jeopardise the natural unfolding of my research or artificially cut off unknown directions of travel

that yet may yield more perspicacious insights. Equally, reflecting on the conventions of presenting my findings in a thesis with clearly separated aims is perhaps a falsehood of research that hints towards reductionism and the cause and effect of postpositivism. I suggest that, although the findings of each research aim may stand alone, it is when we view them as a whole that we may gain greater understanding.

Research Aim 1: towards an illumination of the immediate coach-athlete relationship(s)

I sit at my desk at an impasse. I am surrounded by the paraphernalia of research, trying to bring my data readings, reflexive logs, and academic papers together. In attempting to see how my research aims sit alongside each other, I consider how they do not exist apart, but that further understanding could be augmented by considering their relationship to the whole. Like the repeating patterns of a tapestry woven from many threads, I strive to see connections and motifs that will bring it all together. So I start with the centre of the tapestry to pick out the main protagonists and try to imagine their relation to one another, highlighting their uniqueness. Rather than weaving the same familiar figures, I wanted to present their relationships differently, perhaps using unfamiliar types of thread to illuminate the scene. Consequently, I start with the first aim and apply the iterative process.

Originally, I was drawn to exploring the coach-athlete relationship(s) owing to a deep dissatisfaction with present patterns of understanding. These coaching models proposed by Jowett and colleagues treat the coach-athlete relationship(s) as a homogenous mass which can be measured and evaluated by the same criteria (Jowett, 2007; 2009; Jowett and Cockerill, 2003; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004). Variations in elite, performance, participatory, or community sport are unaccounted for and do not consider the specific nuances or nature of different

sports. In contrast, I sought to create new weavings and configurations in the tapestry and, to this end, I argue that my vignettes allow me to do so, demonstrating heterogeneity and uniqueness. Subsequently, I propose that my research supports an understanding of sports coaching as being a disputed endeavour, moreover, contributing towards a reading in which the coach-athlete relationship(s) is subject to multiple, conflicting, and intersecting social forces. Jowett and others working in a similar vein work do not account for the way that power moves and this a limitation that my work seeks to address.

My reading of the data suggests that both parties and others are involved in a dynamic power relation that frames, challenges, and redefines their accord. The interpersonal relationship comes under the spotlight and the vignettes presented portray a highly colourful world in which both actors employ various strategies and behaviours, demonstrating interdependence, cooperation, contestation, negotiation, and compromise in power. Their relationships are variously depicted as intense, complex, highly unique, and changeable over time as the power asymmetries are played out in different contexts. They are themselves effected by other operations of power. Any coach-athlete relationship is located in the arena where funding, selection, sponsorship and sport politics will, and can, influence both parties. Not only are behaviours invoked, but, I posit that, the coach-athlete relationship(s) is a vital area in which identities are forged, reimagined, and refined leading to specific ways that actors consider themselves, their agency, and others.

A third of my interview questions were centred around unpacking elements within and between specific coach-athlete relationships at the micro-level. Without resorting to the 'grand theorising' so distasteful to a postmodern palate, possibly one aspect that I saw as uniting the relationships depicted was they often appeared emotionally charged with both parties emphasising their emotional investment in each other. Rather than this being absolute, however, this appeared subject to time and situation. Additionally, though it was not often explicitly stated by my interviewees themselves, their accounts were suggestive of an interdependent, yet

asymmetric power differential implicit in the data. Both parties needed the other to function, but, I posit that, this was also dependent upon the different stages an athlete and coach are at. Specifically, the shifting notions of power in context were exemplified in Kira's vigorous account of her two most pivotal coach-athlete relationships. She evocatively played out the flow of power oscillating between them, yet my reading of power does not propose that it moves in equal measures. The '…ebb and flow' of power that Sugden and Tomlinson (2002:8) suggest does not refer to the movement of power in equilibrium, or as a finite resource, but instead is relational and less uniform.

Accordingly, I contend that power is forever embodied in the relational and fully present in the real. I join with Elias (1978) who refutes that relationships occur in a social vacuum and offer that these dynamic and changeable power relations are constantly being reconstituted by agents from innumerable points dispersed throughout particular environments (Foucault, 1978). Though I have provided accounts that focus on the centrality of the coach-athlete relationship(s), I have emphasised the importance of agents such as funding managers, selection committees, sponsors, GBs, and others who come in from the periphery, significantly influencing the social context. Here are the complexities - the environment may change and in doing so alter the field of play, opening up new possibilities or acting to constrain in equal measure. By illustration, Steve depicted a plausible story of a coach-athlete relationship in transition and Lauren focused on the unique and mutable qualities of three coach-athlete relationships, allowing me to draw inferences about the operation of power in her world. Displays of overt control have given way to an outwardly more egalitarian situation; yet the power asymmetries still remain and are constantly negotiated (Foucault, 1978). This fluidity appeared to me to be a vital element missing from previous attempts at modelling the coach-athlete relationship(s).

Moreover, I advance the position that a further key element is the notion of contestation and challenge within the rarefied world of elite athletics. My reading of the temporal nature of power relations explored above is not without struggle or strategy. I turn to Markula and Pringle's (2006) adoption of a Neo-Foucauldian understanding of power to assist my understanding of the reciprocal, though essentially unbalanced, power relation between coach and athlete. Using this approach, the multidirectional workings of power become visible to me as both parties develop strategies for responding to the actions of the other. To exemplify, Aaron spoke eloquently about the value of negotiation in the face of conflict and Steve focused on diplomacy in navigating complex relationships.

Consequently, my familiarity with Foucauldian notion of power as productive became more seductive and accessible to me as my research unfolded:

> If power were anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? … It [power] needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose focus is repression (Foucault, 1980:119).

Power is not often presented as constructive in sports coaching and I wish to challenge this position. Thus, the world that I crafted with my participants spoke of powerful partnerships and their transformative capacity in which coach and athlete created mutually supportive, positive environments where learning, development, and experimentation could occur. Specifically, this may evoke different readings. On one hand it is possible to view athletes like Kira and Lauren who devolved responsibility of their training regimes to their coaches as 'disempowering' themselves, effectively neutering their power base. I, however, reject this view and posit that this 'frees' up the athlete to focus on training and competing without the burden of planning Olympic cycles or training sessions. Here, the athlete and coach bring different qualities to the relationship and are bound together in a mutually supportive and reciprocal relationship, evocative of Blau's (1964) exchange theory.

Correspondingly, Steve's provocative account of decision-making also traced the complex operations of power and allowed me to problematise issues of compliance, reliance, and (in)dependence.

Research Aim 2: a reading of the coach-athlete relationship(s) in context

It was my intention for the second research aim to explore the nuances of the coach-athlete relationship(s) from a sociological perspective and investigate the operation of power in the elite coaching environment. Since completing my fieldwork and data section, I have been drawn to examining the interplay between micro and macro elements in which the coach-athlete relationship(s) operates. I suggest that my research supports a reading of sport that is grounded within a wider social context involving additional coaches, athletes, managers, and other high-performance personnel that extends their influences within and between the interstitial spaces of the social (Hargreaves, 1986).

In my attempt to meet this aim, I have also considered how the coach and athlete are cast into the immediate everyday environment of elite athletics. In addition, I posit that it is important to reflect on how these relationships are situated into the broader social context of athletics, where notions of power intersect across class, gender and ethnicity. Whilst I have not subjected these readings of power to an acutely feminist analysis such as Butler (1990; 1993), I offer that the Jess Varnish Chapter is drawn heavily along gendered lines. The exchanges between Varnish and Sutton are potent, inflammatory, and the vocabulary that Sutton uses is sexist and discriminatory. For Varnish to challenge an older male in a high-status position within the powerful institution of British Cycling, is framed by sexual politics and is a high-risk strategy. In respect to athletics, both Tamsin and Felix's voices are chosen partly because they are illustrative of gendered coach-athlete relationships. These tales of subversion, resistance, discourse, and self-knowledge, are imbued with power relations. Furthermore, the influence of gender is visible in that three out of five stories are female. By choosing to privilege women's voices in this way, I have hoped to be more mindful of the gender balance in athletics (Williams, 2020).

In contrast, the two male voices almost certainly reflect the legacy of white, middle class males in coaching or positions of authority. Restrictions of space have curtailed a more detailed analysis of class and ethnicity, but I accept that these are limitations of my research. Nevertheless, I have not specifically framed my research as gendered or located in class or ethnicity, instead I have used power to frame the wider aspects of the coach-athlete relationship(s).

I propose that significant others are essential in providing an extensive social network within which the coach-athlete relationship(s) is a part (like the tapestry). For example, the colourful examples of squad culture were vividly brought to life by Maeve's account and her portrayal of strong ties between group members pointed to a supportive, if seemingly chaotic, web of relations. This brought to mind Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) metaphor of the *rhizome,* in which each member is connected to the other in various ways, based not only on intimacy and reciprocity, but also contestation and struggle. Like social ties, the *rhizome* lacks an original source and propagates itself in multiple ways in a non-hierarchical, non-linear manner. Interconnections are ceaselessly fashioned, and it is this metaphor that encourages me to consider how power networks may grow and flourish, die and wither. When this network is challenged by the newcomer to Maeve's squad, the *rhizome* is cauterised and morphs into a new shape with a concomitant alteration in the power dynamics between group members. Consequently, power has to be enacted in interchanges between individuals or groups and, most pertinently, results in a continual renegotiation and expression of the asymmetric power balance characterised by the two main actors. Likewise, it is articulated and echoed by other individuals and bodies in this process, thus substantiating the argument that power is not fixed, nor is it located within one party (Foucault, 1978).

Similarly, *rhizomatic* patterns are accentuated in the New Balance house, where not only are athletes subject to power dynamics between housemates, but it brings a new dynamic between athlete, Head Coach, and sponsor. I suggest that the

influence of powerful others, such as sponsors, has not been considered before and that they add further meaning to the subtle relations of power being enacted between the central and peripheral actors. For the New Balance house, I ask if there would be the potential for Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) notion of *rhizome* to grow exponentially, permeating more of the social and strangling the athlete? I am reminded of Jason the ex-New Balance athlete who professed that he found the intensity of the house suffocating and ultimately sought a new coach and training environment. Foucault (1987:12) offers that where there is a relation of power '…there is necessarily the possibility of resistance'. Correspondingly, the case of Jess Varnish explored in Chapter II highlights the potential for athletes to engage in acts of subversion or resistance within asymmetric power relations. By tapping into external modalities of power (such as the media), Varnish co-opted the assistance of the press and significant others in her struggles with British Cycling to challenge the power base of high-performance sports. By engaging in a counterculture in concert with the media and actively recruiting other powerful cyclists, Varnish pushed back, providing a novel interpretation of the way that athletes navigate elite sport. Consequently, she was able to challenge the powerful GB, effectively forcing out one of the major figures in the organisation and cascading a series of reviews and an employment tribunal. At the time of writing Varnish's appeal regarding her employment status within British Cycling is underway.

If successful, she could force GBs to rethink their relationships and conduct towards Olympic and Paralympic athletes, effectively redefining their employability status (Cary, 2020).

Although not as extreme as Varnish, athletes like Jason, Maeve, and Kira are also representative of those who are perceived to have limited recourse to power, yet by actively leaving a coach they are exercising their freedom and power to choose. This embodiment of power reframes athletes as active agents instead of passive recipients of the power structures outlined.

Whilst I have used various writings of power theorists throughout my academic study, it is to Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980) that I have often turned. Rather than dismantling his multiple approaches to study of modern power into discrete sections such as disciplinary techniques, technologies of the self, the Panoptican or more Neo-Foucauldian aspects of bio-power and governmentally, I have tried to apply a more general Foucauldian-inspired approach on the characteristics of modern power. Specifically, it is Foucault's consideration of power as non-unidirectional and non-hierarchical in which the relational aspects of power are vital to my thinking and central to my research. Consequently, throughout my storied section in Chapter VIII, I have endeavoured to show that my interviewees are contained within an interplay of liquid and variable relations in which the exploits of some endeavour to influence or direct '…the possible field of action of others' (Foucault, 1983:221). Writing this brings to mind the variety of dynamic, reciprocal, and positive sporting relationships forged via Aaron's innovative high-performance squad system of coaching. Each individual appears to be subject to, and constitutive of, this mobile interplay of relations in which the operations of power are diffuse and spread between athletes, coaches, and support personnel. Not only are other coaches and administrative staff able to exert influence on athletes, but other elite athletes, like Laura Muir in Kira and Steve's stories, also have notable effects on the environment. Rather than proactively imposing herself in the field, what is interesting is the way that she is perceived and her agency interpreted by others and GB systems.

Taking this more encompassing approach has been transformative for me in helping to break the chains binding me to the notion of power being invested purely in the coach. I can appreciate the potency of this notion, but to ignore its location in the social is both disingenuous and dangerous, blinding us to other ways of knowing. In summary, I offer that Foucault's interpretation of the relational, diffuse, embodied, enacted, and productive aspects of power have influenced my thinking in ways that reimagine the coach-athlete landscape, mapping out new readings (Gaventa, 2003).

***Research Aim 3: interpreting the wider social and cultural aspects of elite sport
and their relation to the coach-athlete relationship(s)***

Similar to the second research aim, the third aspect of my research pitches both
protagonists into the social sphere where I sought to challenge existing models of
the coach-athlete relationship(s). To what extent can I dispute these conceptual
understandings as being dyadic, binary, and closed and how far can I recast these
entrenched notions? To help me answer this question, I widen my gaze to
encompass the public operations of power, introducing aspects of visibility,
accountability, politics, processes, and policies to the mix. I was curious to examine
how power as exercised by GBs, sporting bodies, funding agents and other
stakeholders may influence coaches and athletes and how it may relate to their
relationship.

Reflecting on my data stories and considering them in the light of policy
documents, strategies, and other apparatus of legitimacy belonging to key sports
organisations, leads me to consider how language and discourse significantly
influence the culture of elite performance programmes in the UK. The stories speak
to me in terms of the vocabulary of 'no compromise' and 'only medals count' – a
powerful discourse in itself. These themes introduced in Chapter II with the story of
Jess Varnish in British Cycling, have concomitant ramifications for the athletes and
coaches negotiating constant performance targets, funding issues, and selection
policies in elite athletics.

These issues are important for Rose (2000) contends that policy documents and
other apparatus of legitimacy are fundamental to the establishment and
(re)articulation of dominant discourses and act as a language of description. By
becoming official, published, and treated as contractual arrangements, these
documents govern expectations and behaviour as they become visible (Holborow,
2015). It is only very recently that stories of physical and emotional abuse, athlete-
coach fall out, and mental health concerns related to loss of sporting identity have

come to the national consciousness, leading to a questioning of the high-performance sports culture (Cunningham, 2017; Grey-Thompson, 2017; Kelner 2016b). I contend that these elements, together with the pressures inherent in the commodification of sport, are centred around power and thus worthy of academic study.

Specifically, these issues are inextricably linked to economic power which is expressed through funding pressures and financial uncertainty within my stories. Kira and Maeve may have experienced the hardships of existing outside the WCPP and the UKA system, but Lauren also demonstrated an awareness of the precarious and temporal nature of funding arrangements and the effect that it has on her agency. Oscar brought my attention to the seemingly arbitrary methods sports organisations used to quantify and classify athletes' performances set against targets to which injury and overtraining were common results, which is in itself linked to organisational power. Coaches spoke of a lack of opportunities to progress to the elite level and stakeholders, such as Aaron and Ryan with dual roles in sports administration and coaching themselves, emphasised the insecurity of working in this industry. My readings offer that not only are athletes subject to asymmetric power differentials between themselves and the monolith GBs, but that jobs and career opportunities within the sports organisations are inextricably linked to performance targets and the orthodoxy of 'only medals count'. Elite sport is not immune to the sweeping effects of neoliberalism, as the widespread application of metrics and quantifiable outcomes illustrate (Bush et al., 2013). In this way, both athletes and sports organisations, as part of the audit culture, are tied to the operation of power that they are held accountable for targets and metrics often beyond their control. For example, in open category events in which the field of play is affected by external factors, for athletes (like Kira) to be held accountable for all unforeseen factors is an abstraction.

Consequently, whole organisational departments are susceptible to having their funding cut with jobs at risk if performance targets are not met. I suggest that this

may also invoke a cascade effect running through entire sporting bodies such as UKA or the HCAFs and serve to substantiate existing power relations between parties, lending potency to specific regimes of truth substantiated through the shared discourse of 'no compromise' (Foucault, 1980). Additionally, as Aaron inferred, frequent changes in the upper echelons of sports bodies often result in restructuring or reprioritising of resources or policies leaving some employees without a job. These readings serve to emphasise not only the temporal and situational application of power relations in British athletics, but their diffuse, *rhizomatic* and multi-layered effects throughout the social (Foucault, 1977; 1978; Hargreaves, 1986; Westwood, 2002). I offer that these shifts in power relations are not catered for in the light of Jowett and colleagues' theorisations.

Consideration of the three aims together leads me to question the dominance of behavioural humanist psychology in the study of the coach-athlete relationship and suggest that sports coaches could look to other educational endeavours such as sociology, physical cultural studies, and education for other approaches to this rapidly developing field. Furthermore, I offer that Foucauldian (1978) operations of power that extend, capillary-like through the social wrestle the sterile, apolitical grip from humanist or postpositivist approaches. It is to the postmodern and poststructural application of power as a framework that I now turn, to help me answer some of the tacit questions inherent in my research.

Responses to implicit questions suggestive of the research: looking beneath the surface

Chapter V saw me attempt to explore the manifold complexities of the postmodern perspective and poststructural theorising, its various meanings, tensions, difficulties and contradictions. In doing so, I have attempted to marshal certain aspects of these onto-epistemological positions, their various approaches to power, knowledge, and language and apply it to my research. This undertaking leads me to question how useful was it as an approach in illuminating relations of power in elite sport in the first place? Did it work? In addition, how good was it as an exercise in thinking differently about coach-athlete relationships in the high-performance setting? I begin to answer these questions by reframing my reading of what it means to be postmodern and/or poststructural.

On reflection, I offer that postmodernism represents more than a break with modernism (Lash, 1990); it stands in a critical relation to itself as a cultural paradigm and, by bridging many disciplines, challenges what we think we know about power, knowledge, truth, and the self (Flax, 1990). Depicted as a style, artistic practice, epoch, method, or critical reflection (Rail, 1998), I have tried to apply Bauman's broad notion of postmodernism as a '…state of mind' (1992:vii) to

my research. In doing so, I have also been seduced by Lyotard's (1979) scepticism towards metanarratives and consider his questioning of the production of knowledge and a rejection of grand theories as a call to arms. Likewise, I consider postmodernism to be seductive as is represents an opportunity to explore differences within society as well as the ways in which subjectivities are considered to be fluid, temporal, and constructed at the nexus of conflicting social forces (Rail, 2002). I consider that I have used these elements of postmodernism as a set of guiding principles that have influenced my approach to fieldwork; as a series of stylistic conventions and in the way that I have presented my readings of the data.

Establishing the ways that postmodernism can be differentiated from poststructuralism is difficult for there is often a blurring of terms (Sarup, 1993). Whereas postmodernism can be considered to be a broad church, concerning itself with theories of society, culture, and history, Agger (1991) has honed in on poststructuralism as a way thinking specifically about language and knowledge. Being focused in academic debate rather than culture *per se*, I have found it to be a persuasive set of theories that have provoked me into thinking about the fractured nature of reality, its rejection of positivism and interpretivism and the '…critical study of power relations inherent in and resulting from the structured order of modernity' (Aitchison, 2005:430). Poststructuralism links linguistic concerns, subjectivity, social organisation, and power. But, as Richardson (2000a) muses, language is the key to poststructuralism and its role in constructing realities and subjectivities, therefore, cannot be understated. Throughout, I have tried to be mindful of the temporal and situational interactions between words, meaning, and power. Equally, I have appropriated poststructural notions of power as a theoretical framework with which to investigate the coach-athlete relationship in athletics.

'It is a truth universally acknowledged…' that all metanarratives are suspect

Crudely speaking, my adopted postmodern sensibility leads me to deconstruct the metanarratives and their '…modernist assumptions, particularly the belief that "reason" and technological innovation can guarantee unlimited progress and universal emancipation' (Rail, 2002:179). Correspondingly, writers such as Lyotard (1979) and Agger (1991) suggest that postmodernism(s) can be represented as intellectual and cultural discontinuities that repudiate the linearism and ideals of the Enlightenment. To me, the postmodernist condition is attractive as a way of thinking differently, for:

> …postmodern culture seems to encompass various ways of social organisation in which new forms of language, cultural assumptions, meanings, social movements, and power relations can emerge (Fernández-Balboa, 1997:5).

I join with Rail (2002) who argues that the subsuming metanarrative of scientific truth in terms of knowledge creation, as being embodied by a sole and ubiquitous voice in sports studies, is problematic. She rejects the dominance of the general principles of science as the sole way of knowing, instead, considering that sports studies can be enhanced when accounting for social phenomena from numerous viewpoints. I posit that, in trying to deconstruct contemporary sport and its new cultural logic, we need a more sophisticated lens, and to not fall back on safe, reductive postpositive or interpretive approaches that perpetuate a particular way of knowing.

Although postmodernism as a framework for examining sport as a broad discipline exists (Edwards and Jones, 2009; Fernández-Balboa, 1997; Hargreaves, 2004; Rail, 1998; 2002), it has not been adequately used to investigate coach-athlete relationships in elite sporting systems. Despite Stirling (2012) claiming to use a postmodern ontology in her PhD thesis, I suggest that there is a critical discord in her approach that appears to adopt postpositivist methods such as triangulation, an insistence that 'themes emerge', and an unproblematic use of coding and

thematic analysis. Correspondingly, the research focused on psychological behaviours, downplaying the social context and fails to consider sophisticated operations of power. Not only does she present that power is possessive and wholly invested in the coach, Stirling does not adequately adopt a sensitive postmodern sensibility that convinces me. As a counter to this, I have since found postmodernism to be a refined, elegant lens that is not just grounded in behaviour, but also widens our view and brings many other aspects into focus.

Consequently, as postmodernism includes both micro and macro elements, I have been able to rove between them, switching between perspectives with increasing clarity. This has been particularly useful to me as I wanted to move between the interactional and structural to demonstrate fluidity of context and situational factors, and also to consider the influences of wider political forces and the

intersection of various sites of power as they relate to the coach-athlete

relationship. In this regard, I believe that I have been somewhat successful. On

another level, the interactional elements of postmodernism have interlaced

connections with poststructuralism and its central concerns with language is one

reason why this approach is so important to my research (Richardson, 2000a).

Indeed, similar to St. Pierre (2011), I regard that language is key as it produces a

negotiated reality in which all social life is a construction. Moreover, from a macro

perspective, I have been absorbed by the way that particular organs of governance

such as UKA, UKSP, the media, and TV have impact and consequence on the

coaching context, sporting identity, and the commodification of athletes.

Language as a postmodern and poststructural concern

The nexus of these elements come together and help to reproduce notions of

dominant or alternative discourses, in which the relationship between power and

regimes of truth are contested, fractured, (re)created, and (re)defined.

Postmodernism sensitises our appreciation of what language can give us and

poststructuralism seeks to reveal the power relations present in discourse,

therefore challenging what can be known. For me, as a white, middle-class,

university educated woman, the way that I construct and deploy language is very

different to, for example, a working-class adolescent from Glasgow; far from it

being a neutral tool of communication, words are imbued with meaning which are

highly politicised and powerful (Schostak, 2006). Subsequently, because language is

so powerful, the way that we construct power is also based on language. I argue

that if we continue to use words like 'possession of', or 'gaining or losing power', or

by presenting power as an entity or a ball to be fought over, we lose the nuances of

the relational. We need to be braver and seek alternative vocabularies to

understand power dynamics and to use them as points of departure for future

research. In looking beneath the surface, by interrogating the social context in

which power operates and not just its final form, I believe we can alter sports

coaching research to be more mindful of the power dynamics inherent in the

social. Power produces as it propagates identity and is implicit in the seduction of individuals. Thus, '…for postmodernists language is not a simple technical device for establishing stable meanings: it is a constitutional act' (Rail, 2002:192). Sport is evocative and provocative. Not only does sport construct a narrative that society readily consumes (Coakley and Pike, 2014), but it does so by the use of certain words; they are infused with power themselves, demonstrating the centrality of language to my study.

Reflecting on postmodernism as a method

How else has the postmodern viewpoint brought these features into relief that were not clear before? Where does this leave us? I am more convinced that Jowett and colleagues' work that I have critiqued in earlier Chapters, is insufficient and does not fully account for the complexities of contemporary coach-athlete relationships. I argue that we need to consider the power dynamics in high-performance coach-athlete relationships as implicit to its operation, leading to a greater appreciation of elite sporting systems. Therefore, I suggest that not only are the tools and lenses of behaviourist psychology used previously inadequate, but that my thesis provides a more expansive contextual and situational reading of the influence of the postmodern in elite athletics. Consequently, this leads me to pose the following question implicit in my study: which elements of power dynamics am I actually considering?

I suggest that a postmodernist approach to sport embraces the temporal and shifting special elements of power. To exemplify this notion, the high-profile coach, Toni Minichiello lost his job at British Athletics during a GB restructure, less than six months after he coached Jessica Ennis to Gold at the London Summer Olympics 2012 (BBC Sport, 2013). A further example of the temporal nature of power are those athletes who learn about selection or non-selection for international teams via a letter in the post, email, or twitter. These potent decisions made by GBs have

significant effects on athletes, their career and earning potential, thus demonstrating the fluid and diffuse elements of power.

What these examples, and the stories in Chapter VIII, offer is that people do not own power – it is out there – always present, but not always enacted. In this I would agree with Westwood (2002:133) who offers that '…power and the social are enmeshed, the one within the other'. It is both constitutive of and constitutes the manifestation and operation of elite sport. Consequently, the more we examine the workings of this celebrated and rarefied world from a postmodern perspective in particular, the more we can uncover its temporal and situational aspects leading to a fuller, richer, and contextual reading.

Postmodernism as an epoch and as an aspect of globalisation

One of the features of postmodernism is that we are living in a postmodern epoch (Rail, 1998). This can be viewed alongside globalisation, variously described as having political, cultural social and economic aspects, processes, and outcomes (Houlihan, 2008). Consequently, international sport with its diverse appeal to many cultures, is linked to the influence of mass media, capitalism, the international spectacle, and commodification of athletes (Grix, 2017). Additionally, although the world seemingly has structures, the postmodern world with its onto-epistemological concerns with the nature of reality and knowledge construction, is fragmentary and broken into multiple realities with random effects.

Consequently, the transitory and precarious nature of elite sport leads me to consider that sport in a postmodern context consumes everyone and anything it comes into contact with it. It promises, but the exciting thing is that we do not know what we are going to get. Sport as a spectacle in the postmodern world is an intoxicating and heady mix of thrill, excitement, and dopamine – it entertains, but

only for a short time. For me, this resonates with the expression 'fifteen minutes of fame'[26] in which people gain wide, but transient media exposure, be it celebratory or notoriously. Sport, in this way, consumes its very stars needed to sustain itself – another shot in the arm is required to sustain this short-lived entertainment.

Accordingly, when sports stars become injured, dropped, or retired, we can no longer consume them as they have been rendered invisible. Examples can be drawn from Nike dropping arguably one of the UK's most consistent elite performers, Holly Bradshaw, seemingly over issues outside of performance (Ostlere, 2019). Several features publicly available in the media drew attention to the mercurial relationship between sports sponsors and elite sports people (Ayles, 2016; Bloom, 2019a; 2019b; Ostlere, 2019). In this way, I posit that Bradshaw was consumed and negated by Nike, who refused to play the Instagram game or buy into the sexualised ideal of the aesthetic female pole vaulter. Similarly, I intimate that when other athletes, like Kira in my storied section, are dropped from funding programmes, they too are consumed by UKA. I have attempted to demonstrate throughout my writing how funding issues have more significant ramifications than purely financial implications (though this too is substantial). To be cast out of the inner protective sanctum where words are powerful (funded verses non-funded), attacks an athlete's self-worth and self-image. Social and sporting capital can be compromised leading to a loss of interest to potential sponsors, agents, and status within the GB. This can be further compounded by a difficulty in maintaining performances, resulting in athletes becoming less palatable to other forms of income, including sponsors.

---

[26] According to Guinn and Perry (2005:364) the phrase can be attributed an Andy Warhol statement, which appeared in the programme for a 1968 art exhibition: 'In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes'.

Conversely, though I have not specifically set out to examine the relationship between spectators and sport, the global phenomenon of sport as spectacle enhanced through the media is something which is implicit in my work. Postmodernism (re)produces the spectacle in which sport is culturally consumed. And yet, the postmodern appetite is never sated; it has a voracious hunger. I draw this section to a close by claiming that this is an excellent example of the potency of sport, its social reproduction, and the way that sport sits in this culturally fluid world.

Implications and ramifications of my work

At this stage of my research journey, my thoughts are concerned with the potential significance, application and consequences of my work. It is here that the 'so what?' question that I have been asking myself since the start, echoes most loudly. Taken together, I ask myself how may these findings, or windows of illumination, translate to elite athletics in the UK? How may high-performance athletes, coaches, GBs or other stakeholders benefit from my work?

Athletes

Although the majority of empirical work on power in sport focuses on the coach as the unit of analysis (Cushion and Jones, 2006; 2014; Potrac and Jones, 2009) and presents athletes as rather docile actors who are exposed to power (Jones et al., 2005; Johns and Johns, 2000), later work by Purdy and colleagues has attempted to remedy this. Whilst Purdy et al. (2008; 2009) and Purdy and Jones (2011) have shown that athletes can demonstrate subversion and resistance, I contend that the micropolitics foregrounded in their work results in a depoliticisation of the relationship. In contrast, my work, has highlighted the important institutional and cultural setting, where I assert that athlete power relationships are shaped by critical situational, temporal, and contextual factors. Consequently, I suggest that if my research could help athletes to become better equipped to understanding

power workings, then they could navigate more fruitful relationships with higher satisfaction. Throughout my storied section, athletes have suggested frustration and difficulty or demonstrated skill in navigating and negotiating the uncertain and insecure world of high-level athletics. This is perhaps encapsulated by Aaron's irritation towards the lack of input or guidance from GBs to developing young talented athletes 'There's no education coming from British Athletics on how to be an elite athlete'. If athletes can take some of my insights or see resonance in aspects of the stories, then perhaps they may be able to negotiate healthier, more egalitarian relationships, which may facilitate better performance and support the all-round development of the whole athlete (Denison and Avner, 2011). Subsequently, if they are more familiar with the social, economic, and cultural aspects of institutional power, they could perhaps write themselves in to the political landscape, and benefit from their capital and agency with greater acumen.

Coaches

My work also leads me to consider what coaches may take from my research. I suggest that the answer may lie in improving coach education (in whatever form suits), which could in turn be used to better prepare coaches for the realities of elite coaching practice. I offer that my research is a response to Potrac and Jones's (2011) call for a more sophisticated treatment and understanding of power, and could be used in several ways. First, by incorporating power in problem-based learning approaches in coach education, could help developing or performance coaches prepare the athlete for the challenges of negotiating wider power relations within the culture of elite sport. Second, by adding to Foucauldian-inspired work on coaching practice by Gearity and Metzger (2017) or Mills and Denison (2013; 2018), can coaches question how their taken-for-granted coaching practices and discourse that subjugate and dominate athletes produce docile bodies. Third, by adding to the body of sociological work on sports coaching, I hope to demonstrate its potential value to coaches and sports scholar alike, acting as a disruptive force to the dominance of behaviourist humanist psychology.

Administrators or other stakeholders

I propose that a conceivable application to those in athletics GBs or allied sports bodies is that my work could contribute towards sports policy reform. My research comes at a time when UK sports agencies are struggling to fully comprehend how the contemporary coach-athlete relationship(s) operates in the rarefied world of elite athletics. Set up in February, 2020 by UKSP, an independent review in to UKA found that '…athletics in the UK is not in a good position' and that UKA '…needs to transform the way it approaches difficult ethical decisions' (Roan, 2020b). My work could potentially contribute towards assisting sporting systems to reconsider the way that power may operate, challenging how current practices may subjugate and control athletes and coaches. By proactively driving cultural change could also have concomitant effects on driving athlete welfare and more egalitarian coaching practices.

Other researchers

I am reluctant to direct the research of others, but I hope that my work acts to inspire researchers to be challenged in their own assumptions about power, and apply it to their own sport or sporting context. Perhaps the implications of my work for other scholars may be that by eschewing conventional, simplistic definitions of power, instead, taking a much more difficult and challenging interpretation, may open up new possibilities or insights. Second, that poststructuralism and postmodernism are persuasive approaches that can be used to study coach-athlete relationship(s), not only as a tool for thinking differently, but to break out of the confines of interpretivism.

Critiquing the process: what my work does not seek to do

If I leave my work here, satisfied with my application of postmodern and poststructural approaches, I would do a disservice to my research and stance. For in claiming a postmodern position, I must own that my work is still partial, localised, subjective, and incomplete. This is my account and in undertaking this ambitious field of study I have come to realise boundaries and what it does not claim. First, there are questions I could have asked. Specifically, ones leading to a greater understanding of power in relation to constructions of identity, for 'Power is always present because it expressed and actualised during the formation of the identities of the protagonists involved' (Westwood, 2002:6). As I reflect on the interviews, there were opportunities that I missed in exploring the challenges inherent in (re)constructing the self when athletes retire. A second possible issue is that I had to make a choice in privileging some of the respondent's voices, deliberately silencing others; a significant majority of the interviewees remain on my computer and their accents are missing, which does not sit well with my notions of inclusivity and fairness. They gave up their time to assist me with my research and it seems disingenuous to ignore their contributions. A further point is that there were potent elements I just did not have the space to devote to in applying a particular reading of power. This included examining the role that sporting agents potentially play in alleviating pressures of applying for competitions and securing tightly controlled invitations to the select international circuit (e.g. the IAAF Diamond League). This resonates with another aspect in which I experienced difficulties in gaining access to specific stakeholders within athletics. Specifically, I could not get very close to those people who held the purse strings higher up UKA or those who wrote the polices. Finally, though I was able to demonstrate some sensitivity and space to gender issues, I could have built upon this further. In particular, I am silent on other key sites of intersecting sites of power such as ethnicity and socio-economic class.

Crossing the line…final reflections between worlds

My mind is consumed with reflecting on my writing and full of anxieties about bringing my research undertakings to a close. I focus. Out of the clamorous voices in my head one whispers that by using postmodernism my thesis is just one attempt to illuminate the workings of power in elite coach-athlete relationships. I listen and consider that even though my thesis is highly individualistic, I hope that my approach and diverse narratives presented offers up new readings of power that are provocative, nuanced, and complex. For the agents and players portrayed, despite their heterogeneous narratives, motives, sub-texts, and positions, I submit these readings as a tentative attempt to portray subjective, fragmental elements of contemporary experience within certain elite sporting systems in the UK. And although power itself resists both definition and all attempts to reduce it to a simplistic understanding, I offer that considering its operation may lead to a more thoughtful appreciation of our own agency within power laden social relations. I turn to the writings of Foucault, who:

> …believed that each of us has a responsibility to act ethically within our various power relations in order to minimise harmful modes of domination … he believed that individuals had the opportunity to negotiate and work within power relations in productive and positive ways (Denison and Scott-Thomas, 2011:34).

Perhaps being aware of such '…technologies of domination' (Markula and Pringle, 2006:16) might help how individuals navigate the social and political landscape of elite sport more adroitly. Furthermore, future work that my thesis might encourage is to continue to ask questions about the cultural impact on sports coaching and how this relates to the relations of power within between protagonists across the social, political and temporal terrains.

Word count 84,972 (excluding footnotes and references)

REFERENCES

Abraham, A. and Collins, D. (2011) 'Taking the next step: ways forward for coaching science.' *Quest*, *63*(4) pp. 366-384.

Agger, B. (1991) 'Critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism: their sociological relevance.' *Annual Review of Sociology*, *17*(1) pp. 105-131.

Aitchison, C. C. (2005) 'Feminist and gender research in sport and leisure management: understanding the social–cultural nexus of gender–power relations.' *Journal of Sport Management*, *19*(4) pp. 422-441.

Allen, R. E. and Wiles, J. L. (2016) 'A rose by any other name: participants choosing research pseudonyms.' *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *13*(2) pp. 149-165.

Allison, L. (2012) *Amateurism in sport: an analysis and defence*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Allison, L. and Monnington, T. (2005) 'Sport, prestige and international relations.' *In* Allison, A. (ed.) *The global politics of sport; the role of global institutions in sport*. Oxon: Routlegde, pp. 5-23.

Alvesson, M. (2002) *Postmodernism and social research.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, K. (2018) *Reflexive methodology: new vistas for qualitative research*. 3rd ed., London: Sage.

Amin, A. (2011) 'Post-Fordism: models, fantasies and phantoms of transition.' *In* Amin, A. (ed.) *Post-Fordism: a reader*. Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 1-41.

Amis, J. (2005) 'Interviewing for case study research.' *In* Andrews, D., Mason, D. and Silk, M. L. (eds.) *Qualitative methods for sports studies*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 104-138.

Andrews, D. L. (2000) 'Posting up: French post-structuralism and the critical analysis of contemporary sporting culture.' *In* Coakley, J. and Dunning, E. (eds.) *Handbook of sports studies*. London: Sage, pp. 106-137.

Andrews, D. L. (2008) 'Kinesiology's inconvenient truth and the physical cultural studies imperative.' *Quest*, *60*(1) pp. 46-63.

Andrews, D. L. and Silk, M. L. (2012) *Sport and neoliberalism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Andrews, D. L. and Silk, M. L. (2015) 'Physical cultural studies on sport.' *In* Giulianotti, R. (ed.) *Routledge handbook of the sociology of sport*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 83-93.

Andrews, D., Mason, D. and Silk, M. L. (eds.) (2005) *Qualitative methods for sports studies*. Oxford: Berg.

Arkaev, L. and Suchilin, N. G. (2004) *Gymnastics: how to create champions*. Oxford, UK: Meyer and Meyer Sport.

Arnold, P. (1988) *Education, movement and the curriculum*. London: Falmer Press.

Atkins K. (2004) 'Narrative identity, practical identity and ethical subjectivity.' *Continental Philosophical Review*, 37(3) pp. 341–366.

Atkinson, M. (2016) 'Ethnography.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 71-83.

Atkinson, P. (2015) *For ethnography*. London: Sage.

Atkinson, P. and Silverman, D. (1997) 'Kundera's immortality: the interview society and the invention of the self.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *3*(3) pp. 304-325.

Avner, Z., Jones, L. and Denison, J. (2014) 'Poststructuralism.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 42-51.

Ayles, J. (2019) '"I'm just out there having fun, having a blast and loving life": Holly Bradshaw targeting Tokyo 2020 pole vault medal after rediscovering love for the sport ahead of Muller Anniversary Games.' *The Daily Mail*. [Online] 15th July. [Accessed on 26th June 2020] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-7250399/Holly-Bradshaw-targeting-Tokyo-2020-pole-vault-medal-overcoming-injury-struggles.html

Back, L. and Solomos, J. (1993) 'Doing research, writing politics: the dilemmas of political intervention in research on racism.' *Economy and Society*, *22*(2) pp. 178-199.

Baert, P. and Silva, F. C. (2010) *Social theory in the twentieth century and beyond*. 2nd ed., Cambridge: Polity Press.

Baldwin, D. A. (1978) 'Power and social exchange.' *American Political Science Review,* 72(4) pp. 1229-1242.

Baldwin, D. A. (2012) 'Power and international relations.' *In* Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T. and Simmons, B. A. (eds.) *Handbook of international relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 273-297.

Bale, J. (2003) *Sports geography*. 2nd ed., New York: Routlegde.

Ball, S. (2013) *Foucault, power, and education*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Barbour, R. S. (2001) 'Checklists for improving rigour in qualitative research: a case of the tail wagging the dog?' *British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Edition)*, *322*(7294) pp. 1115-1117.

Barker-Ruchti, N. and Tinning, R. (2010) 'Foucault in leotards: corporeal discipline in women's artistic gymnastics.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *27*(3) pp. 229-250.

Barrett, A., Kajamaa, A. and Johnston, J. (2020) 'How to… be reflexive when conducting qualitative research.' *The Clinical Teacher*, *17*(1) pp. 9-12.

Barth, L. (2008) 'Michael Foucault.' *In* Stones, R. (ed.) *Key sociological thinkers*. 2nd ed., Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 278-292.

Barthes, R. (1977) 'The Death of the Author.' *In* Barthes, R. (ed.) *Images, music, text*. Translated by S. Heath, 1977. Hammersmith, London: Fontana Press, pp. 142-148.

Baudrillard, J. (2000) *The vital illusion*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Bauman, Z. (1992) *Intimations of postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

Bazerman, C. (ed.) (2009) *Handbook of research on writing: history, society, school, individual, text*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Bazerman, C. (2012) 'Genre as social action.' *In* Gee, J. P. and Hanford, M. (eds.) *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis*. London: Routledge, pp. 226-238.

BBC. (2013) *Jessica Ennis coach Toni Minichiello wants recognition*. 9th February. BBC Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 4th April 2020] https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/athletics/21399172

BBC. (2017a) *British Cycling: 'sufficient care and attention' not paid to wellbeing of riders.* 10th March. BBC Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 29th March 2017] http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/cycling/39228945

BBC. (2017b) *British Cycling: Report into culture after general election.* 4th May. BBC Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 8th May 2017] http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/cycling/39811492

Beacom, S. (2016) 'Northern Ireland cycling legend Wendy Houvenaghel speaks out over Shane Sutton sexism claims.' *Belfast Telegraph*. [Online] 30th April. [Accessed on 25th April 2017] http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-cycling-legend-wendy-houvenaghel-speaks-out-over-shane-sutton-sexism-claims-34672387.html

Becker, H. S. (1967) 'Whose side are we on?' *Social Problems, 14*(3) pp. 239-247.

Becker, H. (1998) *Tricks of the trade: how to think about your research while you're doing it.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bellotti, E. (2014) *Qualitative networks: mixed methods in sociological research*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Belsey, C. (2002) *Poststructuralism: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Benozzo, A., Bell, H. and Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2013) 'Moving between nuisance, secrets, and splinters as data.' *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies, 13(4)* pp. 309-315.

Berg, B. L. (2001) *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. 4th ed., Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Berger, R. (2015) 'Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Research*, *15*(2) pp. 219-234.

Bergmann Drewe, S. (2000) 'Coaches, ethics and autonomy.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *5*(2) pp. 147-162.

Berry, K. S. (2004) 'Structures of bricolage and complexity.' *In* Kincheloe, J. L. and Berry, K. S. (eds.) *Rigour and complexity in educational research: conceptualizing the bricolage*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp. 103-127.

Birch, M., Miller, T., Mauthner, M. and Jessop, J. (2002) 'Introduction.' *In* Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M. and Jessop, J. (eds.) *Ethics in qualitative research*. 2nd ed., London: Sage, pp. 1-13.

Birrell, S. and Donnelly, P. (2004) 'Reclaiming Goffman: Erving Goffman's influence on the sociology of sport.' *In* Giulianotti, R. (ed.) *Sport and modern social theorists*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 49-64.

Birrell, S. and McDonald, M. G. (2000) 'Reading sport, articulating power lines: an introduction.' *In* Birrell, S. and McDonald, M. G. (eds.) *Reading sport: critical essays on power and representation*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, pp. 3-13.

Blackshaw, T. and Long, J. (2005) 'What's the big idea? A critical exploration of the concept of social capital and its incorporation into leisure policy discourse.' *Leisure Studies*, *24*(3) pp. 239-258.

Blader, S. L. and Chen, Y. R. (2012) 'Differentiating the effects of status and power: a justice perspective.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*(5) pp. 994-1014.

Blau, P. M. (1964) *Exchange and power in social life.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Blom, L. C., Watson II, J. C. and Spadaro, N. (2011) 'The impact of a coaching intervention on the coach-athlete dyad and athlete sport experience.' *Athletic Insight*, 12(3) pp. 187-201.

Bloom, B. (2019a) 'Holly Bradshaw exclusive: losing a sponsor deal before would have killed me but right now I'm loving life.' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 28th February. [Accessed 26th June 2020] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/athletics/2019/02/28/holly-bradshaw-exclusive-losing-sponsor-deal-would-have-killed/

Bloom, B. (2019b) 'Holly Bradshaw interview: "I've never fitted the image of a pole vaulter."' *The Telegraph.* [Online] 15th June. [Accessed on 26th June 2020] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/athletics/2019/06/15/holly-bradshaw-interview-never-fitted-image-pole-vaulter/

Bloom, B. (2020) '"This is the toughest role in British sport, but I love a challenge" - Meet the woman tasked with turning around UK Athletics.' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 28th March. [Accessed on 2nd November 2020] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/athletics/2020/03/28/toughest-role-british-sport-love-challenge-meet-woman-tasked/

Bott, E. (2010) 'Favourites and others: reflexivity and the shaping of subjectivities and data in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Research*, *10*(2) pp. 159-173.

Brackenridge, C. (2001) *Spoilsports: understanding and preventing sexual exploitation in sport*. London: Routledge.

Bramham, P. (2008) 'Sports policy.' *In* Hylton, K. and Bramham, P. (eds.) *Sports development: policy, process and practice*. 2nd ed., London, UK: Routledge, pp. 10-23.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2019) 'To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales.' *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*. [Online] 'First online published 26th December 2019. [Accessed 20th October 2020] https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846

Brinkmann, S. (2013) *Qualitative interviewing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brinkmann, S. and Kvale, S. (2015) *Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

British Athletics. (2020) *About us: UK Athletics and British Athletics*. [Online] [Accessed on 16th April, 2020] https://www.britishathletics.org.uk/about-us/

British Sociological Association. (2017) *BSA statement of ethical practice.* Unknown place of publication: BSA Publications. [Online] [Accessed on 7th March 2019] https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

Britzman, D. P. (1995) '"The question of belief": writing poststructural ethnography.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *8*(3) pp. 229-238.

Brookfield, S. D. (2015) 'Critical reflection as doctoral education.' *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2015(147) pp. 15-23. doi:10.1002/ace.20138

Brown, T. (2017) *British Cycling is 'elite sport, not day care' - Welsh cyclist Lewis Oliva.* 3rd April. BBC Wales Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 12th May 2017] http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/wales/39482550

Bruner, E. M. (1993) 'Introduction; the ethnographic self and the personal self.' *In* Benson, P. J. (ed.) *Anthropology and literature*. University of Illinois Press, pp. 1-26.

Bruner, J. (1991) 'The narrative construction of reality.' *Critical Inquiry*, *18*(1) pp. 1-21.

Brustad, R. J. (2011) 'Through their eyes: quantitative researchers' perceptions of qualitative forms of study in sport and exercise psychology.' *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *3*(3) pp. 404-410.

Burke, S. (2016) 'Rethinking 'validity' and 'trustworthiness' in qualitative inquiry: how might we judge the quality of qualitative research in sport and exercise sciences?' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise.* Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 352-362.

Burnett, C. (2016) 'Qualitative research in search of 'truth' and agency: challenges and opportunities for qualitative research.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise.* Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 462-465.

Burrell, G. (2006) *Governance.* UKA. [Online] [Accessed on 17th April 2020] https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/

Burrell, G (2009) *Home country athletics federations*. UKA. [Online] [Accessed 11th May 2020] https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/home-country/

Burrell, G. (2015a) *WCPP selection.* British Athletics. [Online] [Accessed 7th July 2016] http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/world-class/wcpp-selection/

Burrell, G. (2015b) *British athletics futures program 2015-16*. British Athletics. [Online] [Accessed 7th July 2016] http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/world-class/british-athletics-futures-programme/

Burrell, G. (2015c) *2015-16 Futures programme announced.* 17th November. UKA. [Online] [Accessed on 7th July 2016] https://www.uka.org.uk/performance/olympic-performance-pathway/2015-16-futures-programme/

Burton, L. J. (2015) 'Underrepresentation of women in sport leadership: a review of research.' *Sport Management Review*, *18*(2) pp. 155-165.

Bush, A. (2008) *'Doing coaching justice': promoting a critical consciousness in sports coaching research.* Ed.D. University of Bath. [Online] [Accessed on 3rd October 2017] https://search-proquest-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/docview/2312351365/abstract/33991C0203DE4A88PQ/1?accountid=12507

Bush, A. and Silk, M. (2010) 'Towards an evolving critical consciousness in coaching research: the physical pedagogic bricolage.' *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, *5*(4) pp. 551-565.

Bush, A., Silk, M., Andrews, D. and Lauder, H. (2013) *Sports coaching research: context, consequences, and consciousness*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routlegde.

Butler, J. (1990) *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge.

Campbell, M. (2018) 'Postmodernism and educational research.' *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(7), pp. 67-73. [Online] [Accessed on 15th May 2019] http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jss.2018.67006

Campelli, M. (2017) *Only 5 per cent of athletes funded by UK Sport come from black or Asian backgrounds*. 14th July. Leisure Opportunities. [Online] [Accessed on 7th August 2019] https://www.leisureopportunities.co.uk/news/UK-Sport-funding-diversity/333041

Carless, D. and Douglas, K. (2013) '"In the boat" but "selling myself short": stories, narratives, and identity development in elite sport.' *The Sport Psychologist*, *27*(1) pp. 27-39.

Carrington, B. (2010) *Race, sport and politics: the sporting black diaspora*. London: Sage.

Cary, T. (2016a) 'British Cycling drops Jess Varnish from Olympic programme on 'performance grounds' and denies it is payback for criticism.' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 19th April. [Accessed on 6th July 2016] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/cycling/2016/04/19/british-cycling-drops-jess-varnish-from-olympic-programme-on-per/

Cary, T. (2016b) 'Sexism. Bullying. A failed drugs test. Where will the scandal end?' *The Telegraph.* [Online] 30th April. [Accessed on 27th April 2017] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/cycling/2016/04/30/sexism-bullying-a-failed-drugs-test-where-will-the-scandal-end/

Cary, T. (2016c) 'Shane Sutton's abrasive approach meant he was always vulnerable.' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 27th April. [Accessed on 27th April 2017] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/cycling/2016/04/27/shane-suttons-abrasive-approach-meant-he-was-always-vulnerable/

Cary, T. (2020) 'Jess Varnish unlikely to hear outcome of tribunal appeal for at least four weeks.' *The Telegraph.* [Online] 18th May. [Accessed 24th May 2020] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cycling/2020/05/18/jess-varnish-unlikely-hear-outcome-tribunal-appeal-least-four/

Cassidy, T., Jones, R. L. and Potrac, P. (2009) *Understanding sports coaching: the social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice.* 2nd ed., Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge.

Cassidy, T. G., Jones, R. L. and Potrac, P. (2016) *Understanding sports coaching: the social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice*. 3rd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Chapman, A. (2013) 'A (re)negotiation of identity: from "mature student" to "novice academic."' *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, *14*(3) pp. 44-61.

Cherryholmes, C. H. (1988) *Power and criticism: poststructural investigations in education*. Teachers College Press.

Christians, C. G. (2005) 'Ethics and politics in qualitative research.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 139-164.

Clandinin, D. J. and Rosiek, J. (2007) 'Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry.' *In* Clandinin, D. J. (ed.) *Handbook of narrative inquiry: mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 35-75.

Clarke, S. (2016) 'Shane Sutton resigns as British Cycling technical director.' *Cycling Weekly*. [Online] 27th April. [Accessed on 13th May 2016] http://www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/news/racing/shane-sutton-resigns-british-cycling-technical-director-222804#QcxtZMKr8251e8Hl.99

Clegg, S. R. (1989) *Frameworks of power*. Sage.

Clegg, S. R. (2005) 'Managing organization futures in a changing world of power/knowledge.' *In* Tsoukas, H. and Knudsen, C. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of organization theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 536-567.

Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (eds.) (1986) *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. London: University of California Press.

Coakley, J. J. (2015) *Sports in society: issues and controversies*. 11th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Coakley, J. J. and Pike, E. (2014) *Sports in society: issues and controversies*. 2nd ed., London: McGraw-Hill Education.

Connor, J., Copland, S. and Owen, J. (2018) 'The infantilized researcher and research subject: ethics, consent and risk.' *Qualitative Research*, *18*(4) pp. 400-415.

Cooke, N. (2014) *The breakaway*. London: Simon and Schuster.

Cooke, N. (2016) 'Nicole Cooke: welcome to the world of elite cycling where sexism is by design.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 25th April [Accessed on 26th April 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/25/nicole-cooke-cycling-sexism-jess-varnish-shane-sutton

Couvée, K. (2012) 'How much did each Team medal cost at London 2012?' *The Guardian*. [Online] 13th August. [Accessed on 28th July 2016] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/datablog/2012/aug/13/olympics-2012-cost-per-medal-team-gb-funding

Coyne, I. T. (1997) 'Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries?' *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26(3) pp. 623-630.

Cranmer, G. A. and Goodboy, A. K. (2015) 'Power play: coach power use and athletes' communicative evaluations and responses.' *Western Journal of Communication*, *79*(5) pp. 614-633.

Creswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. 2nd ed., London: Sage publications.

Cronin, C. and Armour, K. M. (2015) 'Lived experience and community sport coaching: a phenomenological investigation.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *20*(8) pp. 959-975.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage Publications.

Cunningham, J. (2017) 'British Cycling condemned as independent review is leaked.' *Cyclist*. [Online] 10th March. [Accessed on 23rd March 2017] http://www.cyclist.co.uk/news/2456/british-cycling-condemned-as-independent-review-is-leaked

Cushion, C. J. (2011a) 'Coach and athlete learning: a social approach.' *In* Jones, R. L., Potrac, P., Cushion, C. J. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 166-178.

Cushion, C. J. (2011b) 'Pierre Bourdieu: a theory of (coaching) practice.' *In* Jones, R. L., Potrac, P. Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 40-53.

Cushion, C. J. (2013) 'Applying game centered approaches in coaching: a critical analysis of the 'dilemmas of practice' impacting change.' *Sports Coaching Review*, *2*(1) pp. 61-76.

Cushion, C. J. (2018) 'Reflection and reflective practice discourses in coaching: a critical analysis.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *23*(1) pp. 82-94.

Cushion, C. J. and Jones, R. L. (2006) 'Power, discourse, and symbolic violence in professional youth soccer: the case of Albion Football Club.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *23*(2) pp. 142-161.

Cushion, C. J. and Jones, R. L. (2014) 'A Bourdieusian analysis of cultural reproduction: socialisation and the "hidden curriculum" in professional football.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *19*(3) pp. 276-298.

Cushion, C. J., Armour, K. M. and Jones, R. L. (2003) 'Coach education and continuing professional development: experience and learning to coach.' *Quest*, *55*(3), pp. 215-230.

Cushion, C. J., Armour, K. M. and Jones, R. L. (2006) 'Locating the coaching process in practice: models 'for' and 'of' coaching.' *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *11*(1) pp. 83-99.

Dahl, R. A. (1957) 'The concept of power.' *Behavioural Science*, *2*(3) pp. 201-215.

Dahl, R. A. (1968) 'Power.' *In* Sills, D. L. (ed.) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 405–415.

d'Arripe-Longueville, F., Fournier, J. F. and Dubois, A. (1998) 'The perceived effectiveness of interactions between expert French judo coaches and elite female athletes.' *Sport Psychologist, 12*(1) pp. 317-332.

Davis, L. and Jowett, S. (2014) 'Coach–athlete attachment and the quality of the coach–athlete relationship: implications for athlete's well-being.' *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *32*(15) pp. 1454-1464.

Day, D. (2013a) 'Victorian coaching communities: exemplars of traditional coaching practice.' *Sports Coaching Review*, *2*(2) pp. 151-162.

Day, D. (2013b) 'Historical perspectives on coaching.' *In* Potrac, P., Gilbert, W. and Denison, J. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 5-15.

Day, D. and Carpenter, T. (2015) *A history of sports coaching in Britain: overcoming amateurism*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Day, D., Carter, N. and Carpenter, T. (2013) 'The Olympics, amateurism and Britain's coaching heritage.' *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *19*(2) pp. 139-152.

D'Cruz, H., Gillingham, P. and Melendez, S. (2007) 'Reflexivity, its meanings and relevance for social work: a critical review of the literature.' *The British Journal of Social Work*, *37*(1) pp. 73-90.

Deleuze, G. (1962) *Nietzsche and philosophy*. Translated by H. Tomlinson, 2006. Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1980) *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. Translated by B. Masumi, 1987. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Delves, J. (2017) 'Funding for British Cycling under threat – report*.' Cyclist*. [Online] 16th March. [Accessed on 21st March 2017] http://www.cyclist.co.uk/news/2475/funding-for-british-cycling-under-threat-report

de Menezes, J. (2016) 'Shane Sutton: British Cycling technical director suspended after allegedly calling Paralympic cyclists 'gimps.' *The Independent*. [Online] 26th April. [Accessed on 3rd May 2016] http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cycling/shane-sutton-suspended-by-british-cycling-after-technical-director-allegedly-called-paralympic-a7002796.html

Denison, J. (2007) 'Social theory for coaches: a Foucauldian reading of one athlete's poor performance.' *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, *2*(4) pp. 369-383.

Denison, J. (2010) 'Planning, practice and performance: the discursive formation of coaches' knowledge.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *15*(4) pp. 461-478.

Denison, J. (2011) 'Michel Foucault: Power and discourse: the "loaded" language of coaching.' *In* Jones, R. L., Potrac, P. Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 27-39.

Denison, J. and Avner, Z. (2011) 'Positive coaching: ethical practices for athlete development.' *Quest*, *63*(2) pp. 209-227.

Denison, J. and Mills, J. P. (2014) 'Planning for distance running: coaching with Foucault.' *Sports Coaching Review*, *3*(1) pp. 1-16.

Denison, J. and Scott-Thomas, D. (2011) 'Michel Foucault: power and discourse: the 'loaded' language of coaching.' *In* Jones, R. L., Potrac, P. Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 27-39.

Denison, J., Mills, J. P. and Konoval, T. (2015) 'Sports' disciplinary legacy and the challenge of "coaching differently".' *Sport, Education and Society*, *22*(6) pp. 772-783.

Denzin, N. K. (1989) *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (2002) 'Confronting ethnography's crisis of representation: review symposium: crisis in representation.' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *31*(4) pp. 482-490.

Denzin, N. K. (2003) *Performance ethnography: critical pedagogy and the politics of culture*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (2000) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (2005) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2008) 'Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The landscape of qualitative research*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 1-44.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (2011) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Derrida, J. (1967) *Of Grammatology*. Translator. G. C. Spivak, 1976. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. (2004) *Positions*. London: Continuum.

Donnelly, P. and Harvey, J. (2010) 'Volunteering and sport.' *In* Houlihan, B and Green. M. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sports development*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 71-87.

Dowding, K. (2011) 'Introduction.' *In* Dowding, K. (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of power*. Sage Publications, pp. xxiii-xxvi.

Dowling, M. (2006) 'Approaches to reflexivity in qualitative research.' *Nurse Researcher*, *13*(3) pp. 7-21.

Dunbar, N. E. and Burgoon, J. K. (2005) 'Perceptions of power and interactional dominance in interpersonal relationships.' *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *22*(2) pp. 207-233.

Dyrberg, T. B. (1997) *The circular structure of power: Politics, identity, community*. London: Verso.

Eastin, M. S., Brinson, N. H., Doorey, A. and Wilcox, G. (2016) 'Living in a big data world: predicting mobile commerce activity through privacy concerns.' *Computers in Human Behaviour*, *58*, pp. 214-220.

Edmondson, R. (2007) 'Rhetorics of social science: Sociality in writing and inquiry.' *In* Outhwaite, W. and Turner, S. P. (eds.) *Sage handbook of social science methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 479-498.

Edwards, L. and Jones, C. (2009) 'Postmodernism, queer theory and moral judgment in sport: some critical reflections.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *44*(4) pp. 331-344.

Eggly, S. (2002) 'Physician-patient co-construction of illness narratives in the medical interview.' *Health Communication*, *14*(3) pp. 339-360.

Eisenhart, M. (1991) 'Conceptual frameworks for research.' *In* Underhill, R. G. (ed.) *Proceedings of the thirteenth annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Blackburg, VA: Virginia Tech, pp. 202-219.

Elbow, P. (1994) 'What do we mean when we talk about voice in texts?' *In* Yancey, K. (ed.) *Voices on voice: perspectives, definitions, inquiry*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, pp. 1-35.

Elias, N. (1978) *What is sociology?* London: Hutchinson.

Elias, N. (1982) *Power and civility: the civilizing process,* vol. 2. New York: Pantheon.

Elias, N. (2001) *Society of individuals*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ellingson, L. L. (2009) *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research: an introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellis, C. and Berger, L. (2003) 'Their story/my story/our story: including the researcher's experience in interview research.' *In* Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) *Postmodern interviewing*. London: Sage, pp. 157-183.

Emerson, R. M. (1962) 'Power-dependence relations.' *American Sociological Review*, 27(1) pp. 31-41.

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A. and Alkassim, R. S. (2016) 'Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling.' *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, *5*(1) pp. 1-4.

Faubion, J. D. (ed.) (2000) *Michel Foucault: power: essential works of Foucault 1954–1984*. London: Penguin.

Featherstone, M. (2007) *Consumer culture and postmodernism*. 2nd ed., London: Sage.

Fernández-Balboa, J. M. (1997) 'Introduction: the human movement profession – from modernism to postmodernism.' *In* Fernandez-Balboa, J. M. (ed.) *Critical postmodernism in human movement, physical education, and sport*. Albany, NY: Suny Press, pp. 3-10.

Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S. and Wong, L. (2000) 'For whom? Qualitative research, representations, and social responsibilities.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research.* 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 107-133.

Finlay, L. (2006) '"Rigour", "ethical integrity" or "artistry"? Reflexively reviewing criteria for evaluating qualitative research.' *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *69*(7) pp. 319-326.

Finlayson, A. and Valentine, J. (2002) *Politics and post-structuralism: an introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Fiske, S. T. (2010) 'Interpersonal stratification: status, power, and subordination.' *In* Fiske, S. T., Gilbert, D. T and Lindzey, G. (eds.) *Handbook of social psychology*. 5th ed., volume 3. John Wiley and Sons, pp. 941-982.

Flax, J. (1990) 'Postmodernism and gender relations in feminist theory.' *In* Nicholson, L. J. (ed.) *Feminism/postmodernism*. London: Routledge, pp. 39-62.

Flick, U. (2014) *An introduction to qualitative research*. 5th ed., London: Sage Publications Limited.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J. H. (2000) 'The interview: from structured questions to negotiated text.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 645-672.

Fotheringham, W. (2016) 'Shane Sutton saga: 10 key questions from British Cycling's week of crisis.' *The Guardian.* [Online] 29th April. [Accessed on 2nd July 2016] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/29/shane-sutton-british-cycling-10-key-questions

Fotheringham, W. (2017) 'Andy Tennant backs Shane Sutton and culture of British Cycling before review.' *The Guardian.* [Online] 3rd April. [Accessed on 12th May 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/apr/03/andy-tennant-backs-british-cycling-shane-sutton

Foucault, M. (1970, reprinted 2002) *The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routlegde Classics.

Foucault, M. (1972, reprinted 2002) *Archaeology of knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan-Smith, 1972. Abingdon, Oxon: Routlegde Classics.

Foucault, M. (1977, reprinted 1991) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison.* Translated by A. Sheridan, 1977. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1978, reprinted 1998) *The history of sexuality: an introduction, volume I.* Translated by R. Hurley, 1978. London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977.* Translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Soper. Gordon, C. (ed.) New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1983) 'Afterword: the subject and power.' *In* Dreyfus, H. L. and Rabinow, P. (eds.) *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. 2nd ed., Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 208-252.

Foucault, M. (1987) 'The ethics of care of the self as a practice of freedom.' *In* Bernauer, J. W. and Rasmussen, D. M. (eds.) *The final Foucault*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 1-20.

Foucault, M. (1988) 'Technologies of the self.' *In* Martin, L. H., Gutman, H. and Hutton, P. H. (eds.) *Technologies of the self: a seminar with Michel Foucault*. London: Tavistock, pp. 16-49.

Foucault, M. (1991) 'Governmentality.' *In* Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and Miller, P. (eds.) *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault.* London: Harvester, pp. 87-104.

French, J. R. P. and Raven, B. (1959) 'The Bases of Social Power.' *In* Cartwright. D and Arbor, A. (eds.) *Studies in social power.* MI: University of Michigan Press, pp. 150-167.

Frost, N. and Elichaoff, F. (2014) 'Feminist postmodernism, poststructuralism, and critical theory.' *In* Hesse-Biber, S. N. (ed.) *Feminist research practice: a primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 42-72.

Frost, N., Nolas, S. M., Brooks-Gordon, B., Esin, C., Holt, A., Mehdizadeh, L. and Shinebourne, P. (2010) 'Pluralism in qualitative research: the impact of different researchers and qualitative approaches on the analysis of qualitative data.' *Qualitative Research*, *10*(4) pp. 441-460.

Gale, L. A. and Ives, B. (eds.) (2019) *Sports coaching in the community: developing knowledge and insight*. Manchester Metropolitan University.

Galipeau, J. and Trudel, P. (2006) 'Athlete learning in a community of practice: is there a role for the coach?' *In* Jones, R. L. (ed.) *The sports coach as educator: re-conceptualising sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 77-94.

Garrett, R. (2004) 'The response of voluntary sports clubs to Sport England's lottery funding: cases of compliance, change and resistance.' *Managing Leisure*, *9*(1) pp. 13-29.

Gaventa, J. (2003) *Power after Lukes: an overview of theories of power since Lukes and their application to development*. Brighton: Participation Group, Institute of Development Studies.

Gearity, B. T. and Metzger, L. H. (2017) 'Intersectionality, microaggressions, and microaffirmations: toward a cultural praxis of sport coaching.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *34*(2) pp. 160-175.

Gearity, B. T. and Mills, J. P. (2012) 'Discipline and punish in the weight room.' *Sports Coaching Review*, *1*(2) pp. 124-134.

Germano, W. (2014) *From dissertation to book*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Giardina, M. D. (2016) 'Challenges and opportunities for qualitative research: future directions.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise.* Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 446-471.

Gibbs, G. (1988) *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Further Educational Unit, Oxford Polytechnic.

Gibson, O. (2016) 'Victoria Pendleton: corrosive culture forced me out of cycling.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 26th May. [Accessed on 26th April 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/may/26/victoria-pendleton-olympics-shane-sutton

Giddens, A. (1984) *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. University of California Press.

Gilbert, W. and Trudel, P. (1999) 'An evaluation strategy for coach education programs.' *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, *22*(2) pp. 234-250.

Gilbert, W. D. and Trudel, P. (2004) 'Analysis of coaching science research published from 1970–2001.' *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *75*(4) pp. 388-399.

Gilbourne, D. (2013) 'Heroes, toxic ferrets and a large man from Leeds.' *Sports Coaching Review*, *2*(2) pp. 86-97.

Gill, D. (2000) *Psychological dynamics of sport and exercise*. Champaign IL: Human Kinetics.

Goffman, E. (1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Green, B. C. (2008) 'Sport as an agent for social and personal change.' *In* Girginov, V. (ed.) *Management of sports development.* Jordan Hill, Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 129-147.

Grenz, S. J. (1996) *A primer on postmodernism*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Grey-Thompson, T. (2017) *Duty of care in sport. Independent Report to Government*. Unknown place of publication: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 25th April 2017] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610130/Duty_of_Care_Review_-_April_2017__2.pdf

Grix, J. (2017) *Sport politics: an introduction.* London: Palgrave.

Groeneveld, M., Houlihan, B. and Ohl, F. (eds.) (2010) *Social capital and sport governance in Europe*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Gronn, P. (2000) 'Distributed properties a new architecture for leadership.' *Educational Management and Administration*, *28*(3) pp. 317-338.

Groom, R., Cushion, C. J. and Nelson, L. J. (2012) 'Analysing coach–athlete 'talk in interaction' within the delivery of video-based performance feedback in elite youth soccer.' *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *4*(3) pp. 439-458.

Groom, R., Nelson, L., Nelson, P. and Smith, B. (2014) 'Writing and representing research.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 86-97.

Guba, E. G. (1981) 'Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries.' *Education Communication and Technology: A Journal of Theory, Research and Development*, 29(2) pp. 75-91.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 105-117.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2005) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences.' *In* N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 191-215.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (1995) 'Qualitative inquiry and the deprivatization of experience.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *1*(2) pp. 204-222.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (1997) *The new language of qualitative method*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (2003a) 'Postmodern sensibilities.' *In* Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) *Postmodern interviewing*. London: Sage, pp. 1-18.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) (2003b) *Postmodern interviewing*. London: Sage.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (2003c) 'From the individual interview to the interview society.' *In* Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) *Postmodern interviewing*. London: Sage, pp. 21-49.

Guenther, K. M. (2009) 'The politics of names: rethinking the methodological and ethical significance of naming people, organizations, and places.' *Qualitative Research*, *9*(4) pp. 411-421.

Guillemin, M. and Gillam, L. (2004) 'Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *10*(2) pp. 261-280.

Guinn, J. and Perry, D. (2005) *The sixteenth minute: life in the aftermath of fame*. New York: Tarcher.

Hadjistavropoulos, T. and Smythe, W. E. (2001) 'Elements of risk in qualitative research.' *Ethics and Behaviour*, *11*(2) pp. 163-174.

Hajnal, P. I. (2018) *Civil society in the information age*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Hall, E. T., Gray, S. and Sproule, J. (2016) 'The microstructure of coaching practice: behaviours and activities of an elite rugby union head coach during preparation and competition.' *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *34*(10) pp. 896-905.

Hall, S. (1996a) 'Politics of identity.' *In* Ranger, T., Samad, Y. and Stuart, O. (eds.) *Culture, identity and politics: ethnic minorities in Britain*. Aldershot, UK: Avebury.

Hall, S. (1996b) 'On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall.' *In* Morley, D. and Chen, K.-H. (eds.) *Stuart Hall critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 131-150.

Han, S. (2013) 'Structuralism and post-structuralism.' *In* Elliott, A. (ed.) *Routledge handbook of social and cultural theory*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 35-59.

Harding, S. G. (1987) 'Introduction: is there a feminist method?' *In* Harding, S. G. (ed.) *Feminism and methodology: social science issues*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, pp. 1-14.

Hargreaves, J. (1986) *Sport, power and culture: a social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hargreaves, J. (2002) 'Globalisation theory, global sport, and nations and nationalism.' *In* Sugden, J. P. and Tomlinson, A. (eds.) *Power games: a critical sociology of sport* Psychology Press, pp. 25-43.

Hargreaves, J. A. (2004) 'Querying sport feminism: personal or political?' *In* Giulianotti, R. (ed.) *Sport and modern social theorists*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 187-205.

Harland, R. (2013) *Superstructuralism*. Routledge.

Harvey, J., Lévesque, M. and Donnelly, P. (2007) 'Sport volunteerism and social capital.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *24*(2) pp. 206-223.

Heap, J. L. (1989) 'Writing as social action.' *Theory Into Practice*, *28*(2) pp. 148-153.

Henwood, K. L. and Pidgeon, N. F. (1992) 'Qualitative research and psychological theorizing.' *British Journal of Psychology*, *83*(1) pp. 97-111.

Hertz, R. (1997) 'Introduction: ethics, reflexivity and voice.' *In* Hertz, R. (ed.) *Reflexivity and voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. vi-xviii.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. and Leavy, P. (2004) *Approaches to qualitative research: a reader on theory and practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hindess, B. (1996) *Discourses of power from Hobbes to Foucault*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Hochschild, A. R. (2012) *The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hohendahl, P. U. (1986) 'Habermas' philosophical discourse of modernity.' *Telos*, *1986*(69) pp. 49-65.

Holborow, M. (2015) *Language and neoliberalism*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Hollinger, R. (1994) *Postmodernism and the social sciences: a thematic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) 'Biography, anxiety and the experience of locality.' *In* Chamberlayne. P, Bornat, J. and Wengraf, T. (eds.) *The turn to biographical methods in social science*. London: Routlegde, pp. 167-180.

Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. (2003) 'Active interviewing.' *In* Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) *Postmodern interviewing*. London: Sage, pp. 67-80.

Holt, R. (1989) *Sport and the British: a modern history*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Horne, J., Tomlinson, A., Whannel, G. and Woodward, K. (2012. *Understanding sport: a socio-cultural analysis*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Horne, T. S. (2008) 'Coaching effectiveness in the sports domain.' *In* Horne, T. S. (ed.) *Advances in sport psychology.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, pp. 309-354.

Houle, J. L., Brewer, B. W. and Kluck, A. S. (2010) 'Developmental trends in athletic identity: a two-part retrospective study.' *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, *33*(2) pp. 146-159.

Houlihan, B. (ed.) (2008) *Sport and society: a student introduction*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Houlihan, B. (2015) 'Political science, sociology and the study of sport.' *In* Giulianotti, R. (ed.) *Routledge handbook of the sociology of sport*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 208-217.

Houlihan, B. and Chapman, P. (2015) 'Modernisation and elite sport development in England and the United Kingdom.' *In* Andersen, S. S. Houlihan, B. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *Managing elite sport systems: research and practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 31-48.

Houlihan, B. and Malcolm, D. (eds.) (2015) *Sport and society: a student introduction*. London: Sage.

Huberman, M. and Miles, M. B. (2002) *The qualitative researcher's companion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Huddleston, P. and Unwin, L. (2013) *Teaching and learning in further education: diversity and change*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Hughes. J. (2008) 'Norbert Elias.' *In* Stones, R. (ed.) *Key sociological thinkers*. 2nd ed., Basingstoke: Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 168-183.

Hurst, A. L. (2008) 'A healing echo: methodological reflections of a working-class researcher on class.' *The Qualitative Report*, *13*(3) pp. 334-352.

Huyssen, A. (1984) 'Mapping the postmodern.' *New German Critique*, (33) pp. 5-52.

Ingle, S. (2016a) 'Lizzie Armitstead: Jess Varnish has the right to speak out over British Cycling.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 25th April. [Accessed on 27th April 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/25/lizzie-armitstead-jess-varnish-speak-out-british-cycling-joanna-rowsell-shand

Ingle, S. (2016b) 'British Cycling announces inquiry into Jess Varnish's sexism claims.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 26th April. [Accessed on 6th July 2016] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/26/british-cycling-inquiry-jess-varnish-sexism-claims

Ingle. S. (2017a) 'UK Sport accuses British Cycling of a "complete lack of transparency."' *The Guardian*. [Online] 21st February. [Accessed on 21st March 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/feb/21/uk-sport-accuses-british-cycling-damning-report-2012-2016

Ingle. S. (2017b) 'UK Sport 'went easy' on British Cycling to keep medal factory functioning.' *The Guardian.* [Online] 15th March. [Accessed on 21st March 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/mar/15/uk-sport-went-easy-british-cycling-medal-factory

Ingle, S. and Pidd, H. (2016) 'Many British cyclists were terrified of Shane Sutton, says top BMX rider.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 28th April. [Accessed on 27th April 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/28/british-cyclists-terrified-shane-sutton-bmx-tre-whyte

Israel, M. and Hay, I. (2006) *Research ethics for social scientists*. London: Sage.

Jachyra, P., Atkinson, M. and Gibson, B. E. (2014) 'Gender performativity during interviews with adolescent boys.' *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *6*(4) pp. 568-582.

Jameson. E. (1988) 'Postmodernism and consumer society.' *In* Kaplan, E. A. (ed.) *Postmodernism and its discontents: theories and practices*. New York: Verso, pp. 1-9.

Jariath, N., Hogerney, M. and Parsons, C. (2000) 'The role of the pilot study: a case illustration from cardiac nursing research.' *Applied Nursing Research*, 13(2) pp. 92–96.

Jarvie, G. (1990) 'Towards an applied sociology of sport.' *Scottish Journal of Physical Education*, 18, pp. 11-12.

Jarvie, G. (2012) *Sport, culture and society: an introduction*. 2nd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Jenkins, R. (2014) *Social identity*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Johns, D. P. and Johns, J. S. (2000) 'Surveillance, subjectivism and technologies of power: an analysis of the discursive practice of high-performance sport.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *35*(2) pp. 219-234.

Johnston, J., Harwood, C. and Minniti, A. M. (2013) 'Positive youth development in swimming: clarification and consensus of key psychosocial assets.' *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *25*(4) pp. 392-411.

Jones, I., Brown, L. and Holloway, I. (2012) *Qualitative research in sport and physical activity*. London: Sage.

Jones, R. L. (2000) 'Toward a sociology of coaching.' *In* Jones, R. L. and Armour, K. M. (eds.) *The sociology of sport: theory and practice*. London: Addison Wesley Longman, pp. 33-43.

Jones, R. L. (2006a) 'Dilemmas, maintaining "face," and paranoia: an average coaching life.' *Qualitative Inquiry, 12*(5) pp. 1012-1021.

Jones, R. L (ed.) (2006b) *The sports coach as educator: reconceptualising sports coaching.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Jones, R. L. (2006c) 'How can educational concepts inform sports coaching?' *In* Jones, R. L (ed.) *The sports coach as educator: reconceptualising sports coaching.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 3-13.

Jones, R. L. (2007) 'Coaching redefined: an everyday pedagogical endeavour.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *12*(2) pp. 159-173.

Jones, R. L. (2009) 'Coaching as caring (the smiling gallery): accessing hidden knowledge.' *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *14*(4) pp. 377-390.

Jones, R. L. (2012) 'Editorial.' *Sports Coaching Review*, 1(1) pp. 1–3.

Jones, R. L. and Kingston, K. (eds.) (2013) *An introduction to sports coaching: connecting theory to practice*. 2nd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Jones, R. L. and Standage, M. (2006) 'First among equals: shared leadership in the coaching context.' *In* Jones, R. (ed.) (2006) *The sports coach as educator: reconceptualising sports coaching*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, pp. 65-76.

Jones, R. L. and Wallace, M. (2005) 'Another bad day at the training ground: coping with ambiguity in the coaching context.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *10*(1) pp. 119-134.

Jones, R. L., Armour, K. M. and Potrac, P. (2002) 'Understanding the coaching process: a framework for social analysis.' *Quest*, *54*(1) pp. 34-48.

Jones, R. L., Armour, K. M. and Potrac, P. (2003) 'Constructing expert knowledge: a case study of a top-level professional soccer coach.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *8*(2) pp. 213-229.

Jones, R. L., Armour, K. M. and Potrac, P. (2004) *Sports coaching cultures: from practice to theory.* London: Routlegde.

Jones, R. L., Glintmeyer, N. and McKenzie, A. (2005) 'Slim bodies, eating disorders and the coach-athlete relationship: a tale of identity creation and disruption.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *40*(3) pp. 377-391.

Jones, R. L., Potrac, P., Haleem, H. and Cushion, C. (2006) 'Exposure by association: anonymity and integrity in autoethnographical research.' *In* Fleming, S. and Jordan, F. (eds.) *Ethical issues in leisure research.* Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association, pp. 45–61.

Jones, R. L., Potrac, P. Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) (2011) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Jones, R. L., Bailey, J. and Santos, S. (2013) 'Coaching, caring and the politics of touch: a visual exploration.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *18*(5) pp. 648-662.

Jowett, S. (2003) 'When the "honeymoon" is over: a case study of a coach-athlete dyad in crisis.' *The Sport Psychologist*, *17*(4) pp. 444-460.

Jowett, S. (2005) 'On repairing and enhancing the coach-athlete relationship.' *In* Jowett, S. and Jones, M. (eds.) *The psychology of coaching*. Leicester: Sport and Exercise Psychology Division, The British Psychology Society, pp. 14-26.

Jowett, S. (2007) 'Interdependence analysis and the 3+1Cs in the coach-athlete relationship.' *In* Jowett, S. and Lavallee, D. (eds.) *Social psychology in sport.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, pp. 15-27.

Jowett, S. (2009) 'Validating coach-athlete relationship measures with the nomological network.' *Measurement in Physical Education and Exercise Science*, *13*(1) pp. 34-51.

Jowett, S. (2017) 'Coaching effectiveness: the coach–athlete relationship at its heart.' *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *16*, pp. 154-158.

Jowett, S. and Chaundy, V. (2004) 'An investigation into the impact of coach leadership and coach-athlete relationship on group cohesion.' *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, *8*(4) pp. 302-311.

Jowett, S. and Clark-Carter, D. (2006) 'Perceptions of empathic accuracy and assumed similarity in the coach–athlete relationship.' *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *45*(3) pp. 617-637.

Jowett, S. and Cockerill, I. M. (2002) 'Incompatibility in the coach–athlete relationship.' *In* Cockerill, I. M. (ed.) *Solutions in sport psychology*. London: Thomson Learning, pp. 16–31.

Jowett, S. and Cockerill, I. M. (2003) 'Olympic medallists' perspective of the athlete–coach relationship.' *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *4*(4) pp. 313-331.

Jowett, S. and Frost, T. (2007) 'Race/ethnicity in the all-male coach-athlete relationship: black footballers' narratives.' *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *5*(3) pp. 255-269.

Jowett, S. and Meek, G. A. (2000) 'The coach-athlete relationship in married couples: an exploratory content analysis.' *The Sport Psychologist*, *14*(2) pp. 157-175.

Jowett, S. and Ntoumanis, N. (2004) 'The coach–athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q): development and initial validation.' *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, *14*(4) pp. 245-257.

Jowett, S. and Poczwardowski, A. (2007) 'Understanding the coach-athlete relationship.' *In* Jowett, S. and Lavallee, D. (eds.) *Social psychology in sport*, Champaign Il: Human Kinetics, pp. 3-14.

Jowett, S. and Shanmugam, V. (2016) 'Relational coaching in sport: its psychological underpinnings and practical effectiveness.' *In* Schinke, R., McGannon, K. R. and Smith, B. (eds.) *Routledge international handbook of sport psychology.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 471-484.

Jowett, S. and Timson-Katchis, M. (2005) 'Social networks in sport: parental influence on the coach-athlete relationship.' *The Sport Psychologist,* 19(3) pp. 267-287.

Kamler, B. and Thomson, P. (2014) *Helping doctoral students write: pedagogies for supervision*. 2nd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Kanter, R. M. (1993) *Men and women of the corporation*. 2nd ed., New York: Basic books.

Kaplan, E. A. (1988) 'Introduction.' *In* Kaplan, E. A. (ed.) *Postmodernism and its discontents: theories and practices*. New York: Verso, pp. 1-9.

Karnieli-Miller, O., Strier, R. and Pessach, L. (2009) 'Power relations in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Health Research*, *19*(2) pp. 279-289.

Kelly, A. (2008) 'In defence of anonymity: rejoining the criticism.' *British Educational Research Journal*, *35*(3) pp. 431-445.

Kelner, M (2016a) 'Jess Varnish makes sensational claims against British cycling chief Shane Sutton: I was told to go and have a baby... and my bum was too big.' *The Daily Mail*. [Online] 22nd April 2016. [Accessed on 3rd May 2016] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/sportsnews/article-3554439/Jess-Varnish-makes-sensational-claims-against-British-cycling-chief-told-baby-bum-big.html

Kelner, M. (2016b) 'UK Sport to abandon 'win at all costs' mentality and will prioritise athletes' welfare in wake of British Cycling's sexism row.' *The Daily Mail.* [Online] 10th May. [Accessed on 2nd July 2016] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-3583690/UK-Sport-abandon-win-costs-mentality-prioritise-athletes-welfare-wake-British-Cycling-s-sexism-row.html

Kelner, M. (2016c) 'Banned Shane Sutton faces bullying probe, and new claims emerge that he allegedly referred to GB para-cyclists as "wobblies" and "gimps."' *The Daily Mail*. [Online] 26th April. [Accessed on 27th April 2017] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/sportsnews/article-3560333/British-Cycling-chief-coach-Shane-Sutton-faces-bullying-probe-allegedly-referring-para-cyclists-wobblies-gimps.html

Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H. and Anderson, C. (2003) 'Power, approach, and inhibition.' *Psychological Review*, *110*(2) pp. 265-284.

Kent, G. (2000a) 'Informed consent.' *In* Burton, D. (ed.) *Research training for social scientists: a handbook for postgraduate researchers*. London: Sage, pp. 81-87.

Kent, G. (2000b) 'Ethical principles.' *In* Burton, D. (ed.) *Research training for social scientists: a handbook for postgraduate researchers*. London: Sage, pp. 61-67.

Kidman, L. (2001) *Developing decision makers: an empowerment approach to coaching*. Christchurch, New Zealand: IPC Print Resources.

Kidman, L. (ed.) (2005) *Athlete-centred coaching: developing inspired and inspiring people*. Christchurch, New Zealand: IPC Print Resources.

Kidman, L. and Hanrahan, S. J. (2011) *The coaching process: a practical guide to becoming an effective sports coach.* 3rd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routlegde.

Kilgore, D. W. (2001) 'Critical and postmodern perspectives on adult learning.' *In* Merriam, S (ed.) *New directions for adult and continuing education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 53-61.

Kim, Y. (2011) 'The pilot study in qualitative inquiry: identifying issues and learning lessons for culturally competent research.' *Qualitative Social Work*, *10*(2) pp. 190-206.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2001) 'Describing the bricolage: conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *7*(6) pp. 679-692.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005) 'On to the next level: continuing the conceptualization of the bricolage.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *11*(3) pp. 323-350.

King, S. (2015) 'Poststructuralism and the sociology of sport.' *In* Giulianotti, R. (ed.) *Routledge handbook of the sociology of sport*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 94-104.

Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2013) '"Data" as vital illusion.' *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies*, *13*(4) pp. 274-278.

Krane, V. (2016) 'Embracing the messiness of qualitative research: challenges and opportunities for qualitative researchers in sport and exercise.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 472-475.

Krefting, L. (1991) 'Rigor in qualitative research: the assessment of trustworthiness.' *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *45*(3) pp. 214-222.

Kuecker, E. (2018) 'Post-qualitative inquiry and Walter Benjamin's "one-way street."' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *26*(3-4) pp. 271-280.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970) *The structure of scientific revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Kvale, S. (2008) *Doing interviews*. London: Sage.

Lafrenière, M. A. K., Jowett, S., Vallerand, R. J. and Carbonneau, N. (2011) 'Passion for coaching and the quality of the coach–athlete relationship: the mediating role of coaching behaviours.' *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *12*(2) pp. 144-152.

Lahman, M. K., Rodriguez, K. L., Moses, L., Griffin, K. M., Mendoza, B. M. and Yacoub, W. (2015) 'A rose by any other name is still a rose? Problematizing pseudonyms in research.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *21*(5) pp. 445-453.

Laios, A., Theodorakis, N. and Gargalianos, D. (2003) 'Leadership and power: two important factors for effective coaching.' *International Sports Journal*, *7*(1), pp. 150-154.

Laker, A. (2002) *The sociology of sport and physical education: an introductory reader*. London: Routlegde Falmer.

Lash, S. (1990) *Sociology of postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

Lather, P. (1993) 'Fertile obsession: validity after poststructuralism.' *The Sociological Quarterly*, *34*(4) pp. 673-693.

Lather, P. (2009) 'Getting lost: feminist efforts toward a double (d) science.' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 30(1) pp. 222-230.

Lather, P. and St. Pierre, E. A. (2013) 'Post-qualitative research.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *26*(6) pp. 629-633.

Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the social: an introduction to actor-network theory*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lawrence, P. (2018) 'A narrative approach to coaching multiple selves.' *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring,* 16(2) pp. 32-41.

Lawton, M. (2017) 'British Cycling's wheels blown off by explosive report into 'culture of fear', 'dysfunctional leadership', lack of good governance and 'inept' handling of Jess Varnish's sexism allegation' *The Daily Mail*. [Online] 9th March. [Accessed on 12 May 2017] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-4298982/British-Cycling-s-wheels-blown-explosive-report.html

Lawton, M. and Kelner, M. (2017) 'Sir Bradley Wiggins' story does not add up... Nicole Cooke savages British Cycling and Team Sky for use of medical exemptions.' *The Daily Mail.* [Online] 24th January. [Accessed 26th April 2017] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/sportsnews/article-4154154/Bradley-Wiggins-story-does-not-add-says-Nicole-Cooke.html

Leavy, P. (2014) 'Introduction.' *In* Leavy, P. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-13.

Leonard, P. (1997) *Postmodern welfare: reconstructing an emancipatory project*. London: Sage.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966) *The savage mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1968) *Structural anthropology*. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Zilber, T. (1998) *Narrative research: reading, analysis, and interpretation* (Vol. 47). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Denzin, N. K. (eds.) (2003) *Turning points in qualitative research: tying knots in a handkerchief* (Vol. 2). Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman Altamira.

Lincoln, Y. S and Guba, E. A. (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A. and Guba, E. G. (2011) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 4th ed., Thousand oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 97-128.

Linstead, S. (2015) 'Poststructuralist theory.' *In* Mir, R., Willmott, H. and Greenwood, M. (eds.) *The Routledge companion to philosophy in organization studies*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 171-183.

Lister, J. (2011) *Athletics in the United Kingdom: the rise and fall of the British Athletic Federation*. Tatham Publishing

Long, J., Hylton, K., Spracklen, K., Ratna, A. and Bailey, S. (2009) *Systematic review of the literature on black and minority ethnic communities in sport and physical recreation.* Leeds: Carnegie Research Institute LMU [Online] [Accessed on 7th August 2019] http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/596/1/BME%20Final%20Full%20%20Report.pdf

Lorimer, R. and Jowett, S. (2009) 'Empathic accuracy, meta-perspective, and satisfaction in the coach-athlete relationship.' *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *21*(2) pp. 201-212.

Lovett, S. (2017) 'Former Olympic cyclist Nicole Cooke raises accusations of widespread doping and sexism within cycling.' *The Independent*. [Online] 24th January. [Accessed on 25th April 2017] http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cycling/nicole-cooke-sexism-cycling-doping-bradley-wiggins-dave-brailsford-a7543696.html

Lukes, S. (2004) *Power: a radical view*. 2nd ed., London: Red Globe Press.

Luttrell, W. (ed.) (2010) *Qualitative educational research: readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. New York: Routledge.

Lyle, J. (2002) *Sports coaching concepts: a framework for coaches' behaviour*. London: Routlegde.

Lyle, J. and Cushion, C. (2017) *Sport coaching concepts: a framework for coaching practice*. 2nd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Lyotard, J. (1979) *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*. Translated by G. Bennington and B. Massumi, 1984. Manchester: Manchester Press.

Machiavelli, N. (1532) *The Prince*. Translated by G. Bull, 2003. London, Penguin Books.

MacLean, L. M., Meyer, M. and Estable, A. (2004) 'Improving accuracy of transcripts in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Health Research*, *14*(1) pp. 113-123.

McDonald, I. (2002) 'Critical social research and political intervention: moralistic verses radical approaches.' *In* Sugden, J. P. and Tomlinson, A. (eds.) *Power games: a critical sociology of sport*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 100-116.

McIntosh, P. (1979) *Fair play: the ethics in sport and physical education*. London, Heinemann.

McMichael, S. (2017) *British Cycling's new performance director happy to let riders seek coaching from Shane Sutton*. Road.cc. [Online] 13th April. [Accessed 12th May 2017] http://road.cc/content/news/220872-british-cyclings-new-performance-director-happy-let-riders-seek-coaching-shane

Mageau, G. A. and Vallerand, R. J. (2003) 'The coach–athlete relationship: a motivational model.' *Journal of Sports Science*, *21*(11) pp. 883-904.

Magee, J. C and Galinsky, A. D. (2008) 'Social hierarchy: the self-reinforcing nature of power and status.' *The Academy of Management Annals*, *2*(1) pp. 351-398.

Magee, J. C. and Smith, P. K. (2013) 'The social distance theory of power.' *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *17*(2) pp. 158-186.

Maguire, J. A. (2011) 'Power and global sport: zones of prestige, emulation and resistance.' *Sport in Society*, *14*(7-8) pp. 1010-1026.

Mallett, C. J. and Hanrahan, S. J. (2004) 'Elite athletes: why does the 'fire' burn so brightly?' *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *5*(2) pp. 183-200.

Mallet, C. J. and Tinning, R. (2014) 'Philosophy of knowledge.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 9-17.

Mangan, J. A. (1981) *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public school; the emergence and consolidation of an educational ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Manley, A. and Williams, S. (2019) '"We're not run on numbers, we're people, we're emotional people": exploring the experiences and lived consequences of emerging technologies, organizational surveillance and control among elite professionals.' *Organization*. [Online] 'First published online' 6th December, 2019. [Accessed on 3rd February 2020] https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508419890078

Mann, M. (2012) *The sources of social power: volume 3, global empires and revolution, 1890-1945.* Cambridge University Press.

Markula, P. (2004) "Tuning into one's self:" Foucault's technologies of the self and mindful fitness.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *21*(3) pp. 302-321.

Markula, P. and Martin, M. (2007) 'Ethical coaching: gaining respect in the field.' *In* Denison, J. (ed.) *Coaching knowledges: understanding the dynamics of sport performance*. Oxford: A. C. Black, pp. 51-82.

Markula, P. and Pringle, R. (2006) *Foucault, sport and exercise: power, knowledge and transforming the self*. London: Routledge

Markula, P. and Silk, M. L. (2011) *Qualitative research for physical culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Marvasti, A. (2004) *Qualitative research in sociology*. London: Sage.

Mason, M. (2010) 'Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews.' *Forum: Qualitative Social Research,* 11(3) pp. 1-19 [Online] [Accessed on 13th September 2019] http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428

Mason, R. O. (2017) 'Four ethical issues of the information age.' *In* Weckert, J. (ed.) *Computer ethics.* London: Routledge, pp. 41-48.

Mathews, N. Fleming, S. and Jones, R. L. (2013) 'Sociology for sports coaches.' *In* Jones, R. L. and Kingston, K. (eds.) *An introduction to sports coaching: connecting theory to practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 69-82.

Mauthner, N. S. and Doucet, A. (2003) 'Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis.' *Sociology*, *37*(3) pp. 413-431.

Maxwell, J. A. (2012) *Qualitative research design: an interactive approach*. 3rd ed., London: Sage.

Mazzei, L. A. (2013) '*A voice without organs*: interviewing in posthumanist research.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *26*(6) pp. 732-740.

Mease, J. J. (2016) 'Postmodern/poststructural approaches.' *The International Encyclopaedia of Organizational Communication*, pp. 1-21. [Online] [Accessed on 8th May 2019] doi:10.1002/9781118955567.wbieoc167

Mehrabian, A. (1997) 'Impressions created by given names.' *Names*, *45*(1) pp. 19-33.

Mellick, M. and Fleming, S. (2010) 'Personal narrative and the ethics of disclosure: a case study from elite sport.' *Qualitative Research*, *10*(3) pp. 299-314.

Merriam, S. B. (2001) 'Andragogy and self-directed learning: pillars of adult learning theory.' *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 89, pp. 3-14.

Meyrick, J. (2006) 'What is good qualitative research? A first step towards a comprehensive approach to judging rigour/quality.' *Journal of Health Psychology,* 11(5) pp. 799–808.

Mezirow, J. (1998) 'On critical reflection.' *Adult Education Quarterly*, *48*(3) pp. 185-198.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, T. and Bell, L. (2002) 'Consenting to what? Issues of access, gate-keeping and 'informed' consent.' *In* Mauthner, M, Birch, M, Jessop, J, and Miller, T. (eds.) *Ethics in qualitative research*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 54-69.

Mills, J. P. and Denison, J. (2013) 'Coach Foucault: problematizing endurance running coaches' practices.' *Sports Coaching Review,* 2(2) pp. 136–150.

Mills, J. P. and Denison, J. (2018) 'How power moves: a Foucauldian analysis of (in)effective coaching.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 55(3) pp. 296-312.

Mills, S. (2003) *Michel Foucault*. London: Routledge.

Moch, S. D. and Gates, M. F. (2000) *The researcher experience in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Molm, L. D. (1990) 'Structure, action, and outcomes: the dynamics of power in social exchange.' *American Sociological Review*, 55(3) pp. 427-447.

Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K. and Spiers, J. (2002) 'Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research.' *International Institute for Qualitative Methodology,* 1(2) pp. 13–22.

Moser, P. K. (1987) 'Propositional knowledge.' *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, *52*(1) pp. 91-114.

Moses, J. and Knutsen, T. (2012) *Ways of knowing: competing methodologies in social and political research*. 2nd ed., Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Murphy, E. and Dingwall, R. (2001) 'The ethics of ethnography.' *In* Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (eds.) *Handbook of ethnography*. London: Sage, pp. 339-351.

Nash, C. and Collins, D. (2006) 'Tacit knowledge in expert coaching: science or art?' *Quest*, *58*(4), pp. 465-477.

Nash, C., Martindale, R., Collins, D. and Martindale, A. (2012) 'Parameterising expertise in coaching: past, present and future.' *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *30*(10) pp. 985-994.

Nelson, C., Treichler, P. A. and Grossberg, L. (1992) 'Cultural studies: an introduction.' *In* Grossberg, L., Nelson, C. and Treichler, P. A (eds.) *Cultural studies*. New York: Routlegde, pp. 1-22.

Nelson, L., Potrac, P. and Groom, R. (2014a) 'The place of theory.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 76-85.

Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) (2014b) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (2014c) 'Introduction.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 1-5.

Neuman, W. L (2014) *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 7th ed., Harlow, Essex: Pearson.

Nevill, A. M., Balmer, N. J. and Winter, E. M. (2009) 'Why Great Britain's success in Beijing could have been anticipated and why it should continue beyond 2012.' *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, *43*(14) pp. 1108-1110.

Nicholson, M. and Hoye, R. (2008) 'Sport and social capital: an introduction.' *In* Nicholson, M. and Hoye, R. (eds.) *Sport and social capital*. Oxford: Routledge, pp. 1-18.

Nielsen, J. T. (2001) 'The forbidden zone: intimacy, sexual relations and misconduct in the relationship between coaches and athletes.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *36*(2) pp. 165-182.

Norman, L. (2008) 'The UK coaching system is failing women coaches.' *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, *3*(4) pp. 447-476.

Norman, L. (2010) 'Feeling second best: elite women coaches' experiences.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *27*(1) pp. 89-104.

North, J. (2013) 'Philosophical underpinnings of coaching practice research.' *Quest*, *65*(3) pp. 278-299.

Nunkoosing, K. (2005) 'The problems with interviews.' *Qualitative Health Research*, *15*(5) pp. 698-706.

Nye, J. S. (1990) 'The changing nature of world power.' *Political Science Quarterly*, *105*(2) pp. 177-192.

Oakley, A. (2013) 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms.' *In* Roberts, H. (ed.) *Doing feminist research*. London: Routledge, pp. 30-61.

O'Farrell, C. (2005) *Michel Foucault*. London: Sage.

O'Hagan, A., Buck, C. E., Daneshkhah, A., Eiser, J. R., Garthwaite, P. H., Jenkinson, D. J., Oakley, J. E. and Rakow, T. (2006) *Uncertain judgements: eliciting experts' probabilities*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Olivier, S. and Fishwick, L. (2003) 'Qualitative research in sport sciences: is the biomedical ethics model applicable?' *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 4(1) pp. 1-15. [Online] [Accessed on 15th April 2019] http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0301121

Olympiou, A., Jowett, S. and Duda, J. L. (2008) 'The psychological interface between the coach-created motivational climate and the coach-athlete relationship in team sports.' *The Sport Psychologist*, *22*(4) pp. 423-438.

Ostlere, L. (2019) 'Pole vaulter Holly Bradshaw: "Getting dropped by Nike was tough, I was getting down."' *The Independent*. [Online] 26th September. [Accessed on 4th April 2020] https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/general/athletics/holly-bradshaw-pole-vault-world-athletics-championships-2019-nike-interview-a9120796.html

Palmer, C. (2016) 'Ethics in sport and exercise research: from research ethics committees to ethics in the field.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 316-329.

Palmer, D. D. (2007) *Structuralism and poststructuralism for beginners*. New York: Writers and Readers.

Pallas, A. M. (2001) 'Preparing education doctoral students for epistemological diversity.' *Educational Researcher*, *30*(5) pp. 1-6.

Patton, M. Q. (2005) 'Qualitative research.' *Encyclopaedia of Statistics in Behavioural Science*, 3, pp. 1633-1636. [Online] [Accessed on 25th June 2017] doi:10.1002/0470013192.bsa514

Patton, M. Q. (2015) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. 4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pease, B. and Fook, J. (1999) 'Postmodern critical theory and emancipatory social work practice.' *In* Pease, B. and Fook, J. (eds.) *Transforming social work practice: postmodern critical perspectives*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-22.

Peel, J., Cropley, B., Hanton, S. and Fleming, S. (2013) 'Learning through reflection: values, conflicts, and role interactions of a youth sport coach.' *Reflective Practice*, *14*(6) pp. 729-742.

Pelias, R. J. (2011) 'Writing into position: strategies for composition and evaluation'. *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (2011) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 659-668.

Peters, M. (1999) '(Posts-) modernism and structuralism: affinities and theoretical innovations.' *Sociological Research Online*, *4*(3) pp. 1-17. [Online] [Accessed on 26th October 2017] http://www.socresonline.org.uk/4/3/peters.html

Peters, M. A. (2012) *Education, philosophy and politics: the selected works of Michael A. Peters*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Phillips, E., Pugh, D. and Salman, D. (2015) *How to get a PhD: a handbook for students and their supervisors*. 6th ed., Maidenhead, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education/Open University Press.

Philp, M. (1996) 'Power.' *In* Kuper, A. and Kuper, J. (eds.) *The social science encyclopaedia*. Routledge, pp. 657-661.

Pidd, H. and Ingle, S. (2016) 'Shane Sutton accused of 'dirty terrorist' and 'bitches' remarks by British cyclists.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 28th April. [Accessed on 6th July 2016] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/28/shane-sutton-british-cycling-dirty-terrorist-alleged-remark

Pitner, R. O. and Sakamoto, I. (2005) 'The role of critical consciousness in multicultural practice: examining how its strength becomes its limitation.' *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *75*(4) pp. 684-694.

Pitt, V. (2017) 'Jess Varnish considering legal action against British Cycling.' *Cycling Weekly*. [Online] 11th March. [Accessed on 8th May 2017] http://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/jess-varnish-considering-legal-action-british-cycling-319232#X43IRuurU4aPzJrz.99

Poczwardowski, A., Barott, J. E. and Jowett, S. (2006) 'Diversifying approaches to research on athlete–coach relationships.' *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *7*(2) pp. 125-142.

Polanyi, M. (1966) *The tacit dimension*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pool, I. de S. (1957) 'A critique of the 20th anniversary issue.' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21, pp. 190-198.

Potrac, P. and Jones, R. (2009) 'Power, conflict, and cooperation: toward a micropolitics of coaching.' *Quest, 61*(2) pp. 223-236.

Potrac, P. and Jones, R. (2011) 'Power in coaching.' *In* Jones, R. L., Potrac, P., Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 135-150.

Potrac, P. and Marshall, P. (2011) 'Arlie Russell Hochschild: the managed heart, feeling rules, and emotional labour: coaching as an emotional endeavour.' *In* Jones, R. L., Potrac, P., Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 54-66.

Potrac, P., Brewer, C., Jones, R., Armour, K. and Hoff, J. (2000) 'Toward an holistic understanding of the coaching process.' *Quest*, *52*(2) pp. 186-199.

Potrac, P., Jones, R. and Armour, K. (2002) '"It's all about getting respect": the coaching behaviours of an expert English soccer coach.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *7*(2) pp. 183-202.

Potrac, P., Jones, R. and Cushion, C. (2007) 'Understanding power and the coach's role in professional English soccer: a preliminary investigation of coach behaviour.' *Soccer and Society*, *8*(1) pp. 33-49.

Potrac, P., Jones, R. L., Gilbourne, D. and Nelson, L. (2012) '"Handshakes, BBQs, and bullets": self-interest, shame and regret in football coaching.' *Sports Coaching Review*, *1*(2) pp. 79-92.

Potrac, P., Gilbert, W. and Denison, J. (eds.) (2013) *Routledge handbook of sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Potrac, P., Jones, R. L. and Nelson, L. (2014) 'Interpretivism.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 31-41.

Prescott, P. A. and Soeken, K. L. (1989) 'The potential uses of pilot work.' *Nursing Research,* 38(1) pp. 60-62.

Press Association. (2012) 'London 2012: Wendy Houvenaghel attacks 'vindictive' British Cycling.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 6th August. [Accessed on 25th April 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/aug/06/london-2012-olympics-wendy-houvenaghel

Press Association. (2016) 'Cyclist Jess Varnish says Shane Sutton told her to 'go and have a baby.'' *The Guardian*. [Online] 23rd April. [Accessed on 12th May 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/apr/23/jess-varnish-british-cyling-shane-sutton-go-and-have-a-baby

Press Association. (2017a) 'UK Sport: 'Serious concerns' over British Cycling's handling of Varnish sexism claims.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 28th March. [Accessed 29th March 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/mar/28/uk-sport-serious-concerns-british-cycling-jess-varnish-claims

Press Association. (2017b) 'Wendy Houvenaghel says British Cycling medal drive led to culture of fear.' *The Guardian.* [Online] 23rd March. [Accessed on 26th April 2017) https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/mar/23/wendy-houvenaghel-medal-drive-british-cycling-culture-of-fear

Pringle, R. and Falcous, M. (2018) 'Transformative research and epistemological hierarchies: ruminating on how the sociology of the sport field could make more of a difference.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *53*(3) pp. 261-277.

Punch, M. (1994) 'Politics and ethics in qualitative research.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 83-97.

Punch, M. (1998) 'Politics and ethics in qualitative research.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The landscape of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 156-184.

Purdy, L. (2014) 'Interviews.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 161-170.

Purdy, L. G. and Jones, R. L. (2011) 'Choppy waters: elite rowers' perceptions of coaching.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *28*(3) pp. 329-346.

Purdy, L., Jones, R. and Cassidy, T. (2009) 'Negotiation and capital: athletes' use of power in an elite men's rowing program.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *14*(3) pp. 321-338.

Purdy, L., Potrac, P. and Jones, R. (2008) 'Power, consent and resistance: an autoethnography of competitive rowing.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 13(3) pp. 319-336.

Race, P. (2007) *The lecturer's toolkit: a practice guide to assessment, learning and teaching*. 3rd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routlegde.

Rail, G. (1998) 'Introduction.' *In* Rail, G. (ed.) *Sport and postmodern times*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, pp. ix-xxi.

Rail, G. (2002) 'Postmodernism and sport studies.' *In* Maguire, J. and Young, K. (eds.) *Theory, sport and society*. Oxford: JAI Press, pp. 179–210.

Rallis, S. F. and Rossman, G. B. (2012) *The research journey: introduction to inquiry.* New York: Guilford Press.

Ramcharan, P. and Cutcliffe, J. R. (2001) 'Judging the ethics of qualitative research: considering the "ethics as process" model.' *Health and Social Care in the Community*, *9*(6) pp. 358-366.

Raven, B. H. (1992) 'A power/interaction model of interpersonal influence: French and Raven thirty years later.' *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 7 pp. 217-244.

Raven, B. H. (1993) 'The bases of power: origins and recent developments.' *Journal of Social Issues*, *49*(4) pp. 227-251.

Raven, B. H. (2001) 'Power/interaction and interpersonal influence.' *In* Lee-Chai, A. Y., Bargh, J. A. and Bargh, J. (eds.) *The use and abuse of power: multiple perspectives on the causes of corruption*. Psychology Press, pp. 217-240.

Raven, B. H. (2008a) 'Toward understanding social power: A personal odyssey.' *In* R. Levine, A. Rodrigues and L. Zelezny (eds.) *Journeys in social psychology: Looking back to inspire the future*. New York: Psychology Press, pp. 165-189.

Raven, B. H. (2008b) 'The bases of power and the power/interaction model of interpersonal influence.' *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *8*(1) pp. 1-22.

Raven, B. H., Schwarzwald, J. and Koslowsky, M. (1998) 'Conceptualizing and measuring a power/interaction model of interpersonal influence 1.' *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *28*(4) pp. 307-332.

Ravitch, S. M. and Riggan, M. (2017) *Reason and rigor: how conceptual frameworks guide research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Reber, A. S. (1995) *Dictionary of psychology.* 2nd ed., London: Penguin/Viking

Reed, B. G., Newman, P. A., Suarez, Z. E. and Lewis, E. A. (1997) 'Interpersonal practice beyond diversity and toward social justice: the importance of critical consciousness.' *In* Garvin, C. and Seabury, B. (eds.) *Interpersonal practice in social work.* 3rd ed., Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 44-78.

Reinharz, S. (1997) 'Who am I? The need for a variety of selves in the field.' *In* Hertz, R. (ed.) *Reflexivity and voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 3-20.

Reiss, A. J. (1979) 'Governmental regulation of scientific inquiry: some paradoxical consequences*.' In* Klockars, C. B. and O'Connor, F. W. (eds.) *Deviance and decency: the ethics of research with human subjects*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, pp. 61-95.

Rhind, D. J. and Jowett, S. (2010) 'Initial evidence for the criterion-related and structural validity of the long versions of the coach–athlete relationship questionnaire.' *European Journal of Sport Science*, *10*(6) pp. 359-370.

Richardson, L. (1991) 'Postmodern social theory: representational practices.' *Sociological Theory*, *9*(2) pp. 173-179.

Richardson, L. (1992) 'The consequences of poetic representation.' *In* Ellis, C. and Flaherty, M. G. (eds.) *Investigating subjectivity: research on lived experience*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 125-137.

Richardson, L. (1994) 'The collective story: postmodernism and the writing of sociology.' *In* Herman, N. J. and Reynolds, L. T. *Symbolic interaction: an introduction to social psychology*, Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, pp. 477-486.

Richardson, L. (1997) *Fields of play: constructing an academic life*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Richardson, L. (2000a) 'Writing: a method of inquiry. *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 923-948.

Richardson, L. (2000b) 'Evaluating ethnography.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *6*(2) pp. 253-255.

Richmond, V. P. and McCroskey, J. C. (1984) 'Power in the classroom II: power and learning.' *Communication Education*, *33*(2) pp. 125-136.

Roan, D. (2020a) *Christian Malcolm: Former British Olympic sprinter named UK Athletics head coach*. 3rd September. BBC Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 2nd November 2020] https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/athletics/54007060

Roan, D. (2020b) *UK Athletics 'not in a good position', says independent review*. 7th May. BBC Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 4th November 2020] https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/athletics/52571601

Robinson, L. E. (1996) *'Tripping daintily into the arena': a social history of English women's athletics 1921-1960*. Ph.D. The University of Warwick. [Online] [Accessed 2nd November 2020] https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.362499

Robson, J. (2007) *Teacher professionalism in further and higher education: challenges to culture and practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Rogers, M. (2012) 'Contextualizing theories and practices of bricolage research.' *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(48), 1-17.

Ronglan, L. T. (2011) 'Social interaction in coaching.' *In* Jones, R. L, Potrac, P., Cushion, C. and Ronglan, L. T. (eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching*. London: Routledge, pp. 151-165.

Ronkainen, N. J., Ryba, T. V., McDougall, M., Tod, D. and Tikkanen, O. (2020) 'Hobby, career or vocation? Meanings in sports coaching and their implications for recruitment and retention of coaches.' *Managing Sport and Leisure.* [Online] 'First online' published 6th August 2020. [Accessed 20th October 2020] https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1803108

Rose, N. (2000) 'Government and control.' *British Journal of Criminology*, *40*(2) pp. 321-339.

Rosenau, P. M. (1992) *Post-modernism and the social sciences: insights, inroads, and intrusions*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Roulston, K. (2010a) 'Considering quality in qualitative interviewing.' *Qualitative Research*, *10*(2) pp. 199-228.

Roulston, K. (2010b) *Reflective interviewing: a guide to theory and practice*. London: Sage.

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (2005) *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (2012) *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. 3rd ed., London: Sage.

Rubin, J. Z. and Brown, B. R. (1975) *The social psychology of bargaining and negotiation*. London: Academic Press.

Russell, B. (1938) *Power: a new social analysis*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Russell, J. S. (2005) 'The value of dangerous sport.' *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, *32*(1) pp. 1-19.

Russel y Rodríguez, M. (2002) 'Confronting anthropology's silencing praxis: speaking of/from a Chicana consciousness.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The qualitative inquiry reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 347-376.

Rylander, P. (2015) 'Coaches' bases of power: developing some initial knowledge of athletes' compliance with coaches in team sports.' *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *27*(1) pp. 110-121.

Sadan, E. (1997) *Empowerment and community planning*. Translated by R. Flantz, 2004. [Online] [Accessed on 31st October 2017] http://www.mpow.org/elisheva_sadan_empowerment.pdf

Sage, G. H. (1990) *Power and ideology in American sport: a critical perspective*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.

Sakamoto, I. and Pitner, R. O. (2005) 'Use of critical consciousness in anti-oppressive social work practice: disentangling power dynamics at personal and structural levels.' *The British Journal of Social Work*, *35*(4) pp. 435-452.

Salmela, J. H. and Moraes, L. C. (2003) 'Development of expertise: the role of coaching, families, and cultural contexts.' *In* Starkes, J. L. and Ericsson, K. A. (eds.) *Expert performance in sports: advances in research on sport expertise*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, pp. 275-293.

Sampson, H. (2004) 'Navigating the waves: the usefulness of a pilot in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Research*, *4*(3) pp. 383-402.

Sandelowski, M. (1994) 'Focus on qualitative methods: notes on transcription.' *Research in Nursing and Health,* 17(4) pp. 311-314.

Sandström, E., Linnér, L. and Stambulova, N. (2016) 'Career profiles of athlete–coach relationships: descriptions and interpretations.' *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, *11*(3) pp. 395-409.

Santos, S., Jones, R. L. and Mesquita, I. (2013) 'Do coaches orchestrate? The working practices of elite Portuguese coaches.' *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *84*(2) pp. 263-272.

Sarup, M. (1993) *An introduction to post-structuralism and postmodernism*. 2nd ed., Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education.

Scheurich, J. J. (1997) *Research method in the postmodern*. London: Falmer.

Schostak, J. (2006) *Interviewing and representation in qualitative research*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education.

Schuh, K. and Barab, S. (2007) 'Philosophical Perspectives.' *In* Spector, M., Merrill, D., van Merriënboer, J. and Driscoll, M. (eds.) *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology.* 3rd ed., Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 67-82.

Schwandt, T. A. (2000) 'Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 189-213.

Sermijn, J., Devlieger, P. and Loots, G. (2008) 'The narrative construction of the self: selfhood as a rhizomatic story.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *14*(4) pp. 632-650.

Shibli, S., de Bosscher, V. and van Bottenburg, M. (2013) 'Measuring and forecasting elite sporting success.' *In* Henry, I. and Ko, L. M. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sport policy*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 212-224.

Shogan, D. A. (1999) *The making of high-performance athletes: discipline, diversity, and ethics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Shore, C. (2008) 'Audit culture and illiberal governance: universities and the politics of accountability.' *Anthropological Theory*, *8*(3) pp. 278-298.

Silk, M. L (2005) 'Sporting ethnography: philosophy, methodology and reflection.' *In* Andrews, D., Mason, D. and Silk, M. L. (eds.) *Qualitative methods for sports studies*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 65-103.

Silk, M. L. and Andrews, D. L. (2011) 'Toward a physical cultural studies.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *28*(1) pp. 4-35.

Silk, M. L., Andrews, D. L. and Mason, D. S. (2005) 'Encountering the field: sports studies and qualitative research.' *In* Andrews, D., Mason, D. and Silk, M. L. (eds.) *Qualitative methods for sports studies*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 1-20.

Silverman, D. (2013) *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. 4th ed., London: Sage Publications Limited.

Silverman, D. (2016) *Qualitative research.* 4th ed., London: Sage Publications.

Sim, S. (ed.) (2013) *The Routledge companion to postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

Smart, B. (1993) *Postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

Smith, B. (2013) 'Sporting spinal cord injuries, social relations, and rehabilitation narratives: an ethnographic creative non-fiction of becoming disabled through sport.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 30(2) pp. 132-152.

Smith, B and McGannon K. R. (2015) 'Psychology and sociology in sport studies.' *In* Giulianotti, R. (ed.) *Routledge handbook of the sociology of sport*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 194-204.

Smith, B. and McGannon, K. R. (2018) 'Developing rigor in qualitative research: problems and opportunities within sport and exercise psychology.' *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(1) pp. 101-121.

Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (2008) 'Contrasting perspectives on narrating selves and identities: an invitation to dialogue.' *Qualitative Research*, *8*(1) pp. 5-35.

Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (2009) 'Narrative inquiry in sport and exercise psychology: what can it mean, and why might we do it?' *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10(1) pp. 1–11.

Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) (2016a) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis.

Smith B. and Sparkes, A. C. (2016b) 'Introduction: an invitation to qualitative research.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 1-7.

Smith B. and Sparkes, A. C. (2016c) 'Interviews, qualitative interviews in the sport and exercise sciences.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 103-123.

Smith, B., Sparkes, A. C. and Caddick, N. (2014) 'Judging qualitative research.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 192-201.

Smith D. E. (1987) *The everyday world as problematic: a feminist sociology*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Smith, R. E. and Smoll, F. L. (2014) 'Logical positivism.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 18-30.

Smyth, M. and Williamson, E. (eds.) (2004) *Researchers and their 'subjects': ethics, power, knowledge and consent*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Sparkes, A. (1992) 'The paradigms debate and extended review and celebration of difference.' *In* Sparks, A. (ed.) *Research in physical education and sport: exploring alternative visions*. London: Falmer Press, pp. 9-60.

Sparkes, A. C. (2000) 'Autoethnography and narratives of self: reflections on criteria in action.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *17*(1), pp. 21-43.

Sparkes, A. C. and Smith, B. (2014) *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: from process to product*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Spence, D. (1982) *Narrative truth and historical truth: meaning and interpretation in psychoanalysis.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Dillon, L. (2003) *Quality in qualitative evaluation: a framework for assessing research evidence.* London: Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (Cabinet office by National Centre for Social Research) [Online] [Accessed on 9th August, 2019] http://www.cebma.org/wp-content/uploads/Spencer-Quality-in-qualitative-evaluation.pdf

Stebbings, J., Taylor, I. M. and Spray, C. M. (2016) 'Interpersonal mechanisms explaining the transfer of well-and ill-being in coach–athlete dyads.' *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *38*(3) pp. 292-304.

Stewart, C. and Caudwell, J. (2017) 'Vicious cycle: the 'troublemakers' tackling sexism in elite sport.' *The Conversation.* [Online] 7th April. [Accessed on 26th April 2017] https://theconversation.com/vicious-cycle-the-troublemakers-tackling-sexism-in-elite-sport-75687 (like online newspaper)

Stirling, A. E. (2012) *Initiating and sustaining emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship: athletes', parents', and coaches' reflections*. Ph.D. University of Toronto. [Online] [Accessed on 17th May 2020] https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/35742/3/Stirling_Ashley_E_201106_PhD_thesis.pdf

Stirling, A. E. and Kerr, G. A. (2009) 'Abused athletes' perceptions of the coach-athlete relationship.' *Sport in Society*, *12*(2) pp. 227-239.

Stoetzler, M. and Yuval-Davis, N. (2002) 'Standpoint theory, situated knowledge and the situated imagination.' *Feminist Theory*, *3*(3) pp. 315-333.

Stones, R. (2008) 'Introduction: continuity and change in the preoccupations of key sociological thinkers.' *In* Stones, R. (ed.) *Key sociological thinkers*. 2nd ed., Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-42.

St. Pierre, E. A. (1997) 'Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *10*(2) pp. 175-189.

St. Pierre, E. A. (2000) 'Poststructural feminism in education: an overview.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *13*(5) pp. 477-515.

St Pierre, E. A. (2011) 'Post qualitative research: the critique and the coming after.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 611-626.

Sugden, J. P. and Tomlinson, A. (2002) 'Theory and method for a critical sociology of sport.' *In* Sugden, J. P. and Tomlinson, A. (eds.) *Power games: a critical sociology of sport*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 3-21.

Suri, H. (2011) 'Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis.' *Qualitative Research Journal*, *11*(2) pp. 63-75.

Sutton, S. (2016) *Statement from Shane Sutton, British Cycling technical director*. 22nd April. British Cycling. [Online] [Accessed on 27th April 2017] https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/about/article/20160422-about-bc-news-Statements-from-British-Cycling-and-technical-director-Shane-Sutton-following-today%E2%80%99s-story-in-the-Daily-Mail-0#os6E3AkdwCCssdiG.99

Taylor, B. and Garratt, D. (2010a) 'The professionalisation of sports coaching: relations of power, resistance and compliance.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *15*(1) pp. 121-139.

Taylor, B. and Garratt, D. (2010b) 'The professionalisation of sports coaching: definitions, challenges and critiques.' *In* Lyle, J. and Cushion, C. (eds.) *Sports coaching: professionalisation and practice*. Elsevier Health Sciences, pp. 99-114.

Taylor, W. (2014) 'Analysis of qualitative data.' *In* Nelson, L., Groom, R. and Potrac, P. (eds.) *Research methods in sports coaching*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 181-191.

Taylor, W. G., Piper, H. and Garratt, D. (2016) 'Sports coaches as 'dangerous individuals'—practice as governmentality.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *21*(2) pp. 183-199.

Taylor, W. G., Potrac, P., Nelson, L. J., Jones, L. and Groom, R. (2017) 'An elite hockey player's experiences of video-based coaching: a poststructuralist reading.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *52*(1) pp. 112-125.

Telegraph Sport. (2016) 'Jess Varnish hits out at British Cycling chiefs – "I was told to go and have a baby and my bum was too big."' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 23rd April. [Accessed on 27th April 2017] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/cycling/2016/04/22/jess-varnish-hits-out-at-british-cycling-chief-after-being-dropp/

Telegraph Sport. (2017) 'The 16 Team Sky cyclists to back Sir Dave Brailsford - and 12 riders staying quiet - including Chris Froome.' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 7th March. [Accessed on 15th May 2017] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/cycling/2017/03/07/team-sky-cyclists-back-sir-dave-brailsford-staying-quiet/

Thompson, A., Potrac, P. and Jones, R. (2015) '"I found out the hard way": micro-political workings in professional football.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(8) pp. 976-994.

Thompson, H. S. (2003) *Kingdom of fear: loathsome secrets of a star-crossed child in the final days of the American century*. London: Penguin Books.

Thorpe, H. and Olive, R. (2016) 'Conducting observations in sports and exercise settings.' *In* Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 124-138.

Touraine, A. (1981) *The voice and the eye: an analysis of social movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Townsend, R. C. and Cushion, C. (2017) 'Elite cricket coach education: a Bourdieusian analysis.' *Sport, Education and Society*, *22*(4) pp. 528-546.

Tracy, S. J. (2010) 'Qualitative quality: eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, *16*(10) pp. 837-851.

Tracy, S. J. (2013) *Qualitative research methods: collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact.* Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, West Sussex.

Turman, P. D. (2006) 'Athletes' perception of coach power use and the association between playing status and sport satisfaction.' *Communication Research Reports*, *23*(4) pp. 273-282.

UK Athletics Limited. (2015) *Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015*. [Online] [Accessed on 28th July 2016] http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/governance/financial-statements/

UK Sport. (2015a) *Partners.* UK Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 17th April 2020] https://www.uksport.gov.uk/our-work/about-us/partners

UK Sport. (2015b) *Current funding figures.* 24th June. UK Sport. [Online] [Accessed on 27th July 2016] http://www.uksport.gov.uk/our-work/investing-in-sport/current-funding-figures

Usher, R. (1996) 'Textuality and reflexivity in educational research.' *In* Scott, D. and Usher, R. (eds.) *Understanding educational research.* London: Routledge, pp. 33-51.

Usher, R. (1997) 'Seductive texts: competence, power and knowledge in postmodernity.' *In* Barnett, R and Griffin, A. (eds.) *The end of knowledge in higher education*. London: Cassell, pp. 99-111.

Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (1994) *Postmodernism and education: different voices, different worlds*. London: Routlegde.

Usher, R., Bryant, I. and Johnston, R. (1997) *Adult education and the postmodern challenge: learning beyond the limits.* London: Routledge.

van Teijlingen, E. R., Rennie, A.M., Hundley, V. and Graham, W. (2001) 'The importance of conducting and reporting pilot studies: the example of the Scottish Births Survey.' *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 34(3) pp. 289-295.

Vernon, S. (2018) *Meet Steve Vernon: The coach behind Team New Balance Manchester*. OTE Sports. [Online] [Accessed on 12th November 2019] https://www.otesports.co.uk/blog/meet-steve-vernon-the-coach-behind-team-new-balance-manchester/

Wachsmuth, S., Jowett, S. and Harwood, C. G. (2018) 'On understanding the nature of interpersonal conflict between coaches and athletes.' *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *36*(17) pp. 1955-1962.

Walford, G. (2005) 'Research ethical guidelines and anonymity.' *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, *28*(1) pp. 83-93.

Walker, P. (2017) 'Ukad chief's scathing attack on British Cycling and Team Sky medical records.' *The Guardian*. [Online] 1st March. [Accessed on 15th May 2017] https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/mar/01/british-cycling-team-sky-package-bradley-wiggins

Wallace, S. (2007) *Teaching, tutoring and training in the lifelong learning sector*. 3rd ed., Exeter: Learning Matters.

Warde, A. (2006) 'Cultural capital and the place of sport.' *Cultural Trends*, *15*(2-3) pp. 107-122.

Warriner, K. and Lavallee, D. (2008) 'The retirement experiences of elite female gymnasts: self identity and the physical self.' *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *20*(3) pp. 301-317.

Washington, R. E. and Karen, D. (2001) 'Sport and society.' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, pp. 187-212.

Weber, M. (1921) *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. Translated by G. Roth and C. Wittich, 1968 (eds.) Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Westwood, S. (2002) *Power and the social*. London: Routledge.

Whannel, G. (1983) *Blowing the whistle: the politics of sport*. London: Pluto.

Wiggins, D. K. and Mason, D. S. (2005) 'The socio-historical process in sports studies.' *In* Andrews, D., Mason, D. and Silk, M. L. (eds.) *Qualitative methods for sports studies*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 39-64.

Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S. and Charles, V. (2008) 'The management of confidentiality and anonymity in social research.' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *11*(5) pp. 417-428.

Williams, J. (2020) *Britain's Olympic women: a history*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Wolcott, H. F. (2001) *Writing up qualitative research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

World Athletics. (2019) IAAF unveils new name and logo. 9th June. *World Athletics.* [Online] [Accessed on 25th April 2020] https://www.worldathletics.org/news/press-release/iaaf-unveils-new-name-and-logo

World Athletics. (2020) *Book of rules - C1.20 – world athletics series regulations*. 12th March. *World Athletics*. [Online] [Accessed on 25th April 2020] https://www.worldathletics.org/about-iaaf/documents/book-of-rules

Wright, H. K. (2001) '"What's going on?" Larry Grossberg on the status quo of cultural studies: An interview.' *Cultural Values*, 5(2) pp. 133-162.

Wrong, D. H. (1968) 'Some problems in defining social power.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 73(6) pp. 673-681.

Wylleman, P. (2000) 'Interpersonal relationships in sport: uncharted territory in sport psychology research.' *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 31(4) pp. 555-572.

Wyn, N. (2016a) 'Jess Varnish alleges 'sexism' in Great Britain team: British Cycling and Shane Sutton issue statement.' *Cycling Weekly* [Online] 23rd April. [Accessed on 6th July 2016] http://www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/news/latest-news/jess-varnish-alleges-sexism-great-britain-team-british-cycling-issues-statement-222169

Wynn, N. (2016b) 'Shane Sutton used the word 'bitches' to Jess Varnish, leaked document confirms.' *Cycling Weekly*. [Online] 8th December. [Accessed on 8th May 2017] http://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/shane-sutton-used-word-bitches-jess-varnish-leaked-letter-confirms-303480

Wynn, N (2017) 'Wendy Houvenaghel says she experienced bullying and sexism in British Cycling.' *Cycling Weekly*. [Online] 23rd March. [Accessed on 12th May 2017] http://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/wendy-houvenaghel-experienced-bullying-sexism-british-cycling-321338#Cr4reVDPlJ1Ut5r0.99

Yorke, H. (2016) 'How many medals did Team GB win at the Rio Olympics and how did they beat China?' *The Telegraph*. [Online] 22nd August. [Accessed on 15th May 2017] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/olympics/2016/08/18/how-many-medals-could-team-gb-win-at-the-rio-olympics-and-will-t/