Professional coach educators in-situ: a social analyis of practice

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Professional coach educators in-situ: A social analysis of practice

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1 **Abstract**

2 Professional coach educators are key to the success of coach education and play a crucial role

3 in developing coaching practice. However, coach education research remains remarkably

4 coach centric with little attention paid to the coach educator or the broader role of the socio-

5 cultural context that frames the learning process. Four professional coach educators working

6 for a Sport Governing Body in-situ with twenty five professional clubs took part in

7 interviews and focus groups over the course of a year. In addition, interviews were

8 undertaken with nine academy managers and thirty two coaches as well as observations in

9 eight of the clubs. This paper focuses on the coach educators specifically and aims to

10 understand the nature of coach educators' social reality and practice by examining something

11 of the relational nature of the coach educators and their practice in context. Using the work of

12 Bourdieu the paper engages in epistemic reflexivity and attempts to uncover coach educators'

13 social and intellectual unconscious embedded in and reflected through their social practice.

14 Findings show the operation of a number of socially constructed legitimating principles

15 where the success or failure of the coach educator's practice and learning was inextricably

16 linked to power. Each club (field) was a field of struggles, and coach educators had to play a

17 symbolic and relational game being defined by and, at the same time, struggling to define

18 these relations. Hence practice for the coach educators was both social and embodied.

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1   **Introduction**

2   In professional development programmes, developers/educators support adult learners, with

3   knowledge construction, and enculturation into workplace practices, and have been described

4   as "the linchpins in educational reforms" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p.5) and "change agents"

5   (Penz & Bassendowski, 2006, p. 254.) who encourage professionals to re-examine their

6   beliefs and assumptions to facilitate change. Professional developers in coaching – coach

7   educators – are no different in that they play a central role in influencing practice-based

8   learning and contesting, legitimizing and recreating coaches' practice (Blackett, Evans &

9   Piggott, 2015). Coach educators also operate in an inherently conservative and sometimes

10   anti-intellectual learning culture (Abraham, Muir & Morgan, 2010; Stoszkowski & Collins,

11   2016) where informal learning experiences contribute more to the development of coaching

12   knowledge and practice than formal education (e.g. Mallet, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009;

13   Stoszkowski & Collins 2016; *inter-alia*). Hence, coaches tend to valorize practitioner

14   knowledge and its associated sources of informal learning making the delivery of

15   transformative coach education something of a challenge (cf. Piggot, 2012; Blackett, et al.,

16   2015).

17   Despite this, coach educators remain key to coach education systems and play an

18   important role in learning in formal coach education (Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2012; Reid

19   & Harvey, 2014). Indeed, as Nelson et al. (2012) suggest coach eductors can leave a long-

20   standing impression on coach learners that contributes to experiences and perceptions of

21   formal learning and its effectiveness (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2016). However, research tends

22   to be coach-centric neglecting the coach educator. While there is some recognition of the

23   broader role of the socio-cultural context that frames the learning process (e.g. Hassanin &

24   Light, 2014) this remains limited and does not consider the coach educator (Blackett, et al.,

25   2015). Hence, the coach educator is often taken-for-granted, or positioned as a by-product of

1   coach education (e.g. Hussain et al., 2012; Cushion & Nelson, 2012). The limited research

2   considering coach educators has taken an instrumental approach addressing issues such as

3   training and support, skills and personal development, or recruitment of coach educators (e.g.

4   Abraham, Morgan, North, et al., 2013 Nash & Collins, 2006). Consequently, there has been

5   little research that seeks to analyse the the coach educator in depth, or position them within

6   the broader relational system of coach education. Indeed, Abraham et al. (2013) argue that

7   "there is virtually no research examining the coach developer/educator" (p. 175). This means

8   that the practices in which coach educators engage are rendered invisible. Therefore, this

9   paper focuses on understanding coach educators and developing new insights into their

10   positionality, practices and challenges in order to better prepare them for effective coach

11   education roles.

12   Coach educators, as former coaches and products of coach education systems, are

13   influenced by their experiences that create dispositions and orientate and facilitate some

14   forms of learning whilst inhibiting or preventing others (Hodkinson et al., 2008). Moreover,

15   coach educator's practice is embedded in contexts, founded on deeply ingrained knowledge,

16   beliefs and assumptions about 'what needs to be done' entwined with 'who they are'. Practice

17   is always "local, situated, emergent and linked with prior practice" (Coburn & Stein, 2006,

18   p.42) making educators mutually constitutive parts of any learning culture (Hodkinson et al.,

19   2007). Therefore, an educator's trajectory through the coaching field creates a powerful

20   interpretive framework through which all subsequent practice is formed, and this currently

21   remains unexplored.

22   Hodkinson et al. (2008) argue that institutions embody and reify both cultural

23   practices and expectations about activities and practice. These expectations influence,

24   structure and limit possibilities for practice and exist as ways of doing and being that are

25   considered 'normal'. Hence, learning cultures are governed by values and ideals, such as

1   ideas about 'good learning' and 'good coaching'. Educators are not above the social setting

2   but are developed through engagement with it, and exist in and through their interaction,

3   participation and communication (Biesta, 1994). The implication for coach educators is that

4   they are engaged in a constant process of constructing an identity that is socially legitimised

5   for the learning culture in which they operate. As Christenson (2014, p. 207) argues,

6   "biography structures and is structured by that person's learning processes". This, however, is

7   only a partial explanation because embodied social practice is an element of any meaningful

8   account of 'identity' (Bottero, 2010). To this end, Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' (Wacquant,

9   1989) of habitus, field and capital are useful in that they offer additional theoretical leverage

10 to considerations of 'identity' that incorporate social identity as embodied structure. Brown

11 (2005) argues that practice is a central dynamic of social production, while Hunter (2004)

12 goes on to suggest that culture is embodied and reproduced in day-to-day activities by the

13 interactions of field and habitus through social structures and agents (Cushion & Jones,

14 2012). Habitus refers to the way that an individual has learned to perceive and act in the

15 world based on previous experiences, providing "the feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.

16 52) and developing an *unconscious* competence. Thus, habitus not only generates meaningful

17 practices; it also generates "meaning-giving perceptions" (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). Therefore,

18 coaching is likely to reproduce and legitimise certain orientations of oneself that gradually

19 stabilise into schemes of disposition or habitus (Cushion & Jones, 2012) and can be viewed

20 as a significant central generative site that has the power to shape the consciousness (Bottero,

21 2010).

22   As Hodkinson et al. (2007) argue, central to understanding learning cultures is how

23 we grasp the relationship between how people learn, and the contexts and settings in which

24 they learn. An important aspect contributing to learning is the position, disposition and action

25 of the educator. Coach educators are subject to social structures even as they take agentic

1   action, and that agentic action contributes to the ongoing development, change, or

2   reinforcement of the social structures (Hodkinson et al., 2007). Central to this is the ability to

3   view coach educators as epistemic individuals who are constructed from the epistemological

4   characteristics they carry. This paper therefore seeks to engage in what Bourdieu and

5   Wacquant (1992) describe as epistemic reflexivity, to unearth the epistemological

6   unconscious – to explore coach educators social and intellectual unconscious that is

7   embedded in their social practice and context. This analysis requires uncovering and

8   recognising the epistemological unconscious of coaching and coach education, and

9   understanding learning through socially constructed legitimating principles operating in the

10   social field. The task of this paper, therefore, is to engage in epistemic reflexivity as a

11   strategy to reflect on the epistemological and social position of the coach educator that goes

12   beyond simply 'biography' or 'identity'. The aim is to understand how social reality in this

13   case is organised, constrained and reproduced. An understanding of how coach educators are

14   positioned within the coach education field shows relationships between core assumptions

15   and beliefs and practice, developing new insights into coach educators, their practices, and

16   the structured and structuring nature of the coach education setting.

17

18   **Methodology**

19   *Background and Context*

20   The coach educators were employed full-time within a Sport Governing Body (SGB) coach

21   development programme. The SGB is a large national organisation with a global presence in

22   coach education. It is organised in terms of multi-departments, intra-organisational

23   relationships and distributed work arrangements. The coach educators were part of a new

24   approach to coach education initiated by the SGB. Responding to criticisms of formal coach

25   education particularly its 'de-contextualised' nature, and underpinned by an understanding of

1   knowing as situated in the practices of a specific context (Fenwick & Nerland, 2014), the

2   SGB wanted the coach educators to deliver coach education and coach learning *in situ* in an

3   attempt to better meet the individual needs of coaches in context. The educators remit was to

4   deliver formal coach education as well as supporting coaches' learning by for example

5   offering mentoring support. As a new approach to coach education, this study presented an

6   opportunity to examine the relationships between the social actors and the social structures of

7   coaching and coach education, and how they interacted to produce and reproduce coach

8   educator practice and coach education discourses and culture.

9   The research used a case study in generating context-dependent knowledge

10 (Flyvbjerg, 2011), while mindful of a case studies potential in contributing to cumulative

11 knowledge and conceptual generalisations (Yin, 2013). The 'case' in this research was the

12 coach educators as being in-situ day-to-day provided an unusual and interesting example of

13 the educator role and educator practice. The research reported here forms part of a larger

14 study that analysed the delivery and impact of the new coach education programme over a

15 period of twelve months from the perspectives of the coach educators, the coach learners, and

16 the context in which the programme was undertaken. The data reported here is taken from the

17 twelve month data collection and focuses on the coach educators reporting findings on the

18 relational nature of, and the interactions between the coach educators (n=4) and their

19 assigned 'cluster' clubs (n= 20, 5 clubs per coach educator), including academy managers

20 (n=9) and a sample of coaches from the clubs (n=32).

21 *Coach Educator Participants*

22 The four coach educators (CEs) were all male and aged between 30 and 55. All were

23 experienced coaches and coach educators averaging over 10 years of coaching and coach

24 education experience, and they were qualified to 'level four' in their sport as coaches (the

25 highest level of certification) with three qualified to level four and one to level three as tutors.

1   Two of the participants were educated to degree level in relevant subjects (physical

2   education/ sports science). Each participant is now described individually (identified by

3   pseudonyms) incorporating words from their own initial narratives. This allows each to

4   "highlight critical episodes and events…providing insight into their understanding" (Webster

5   & Mertova, 2007, p.69) of their experience and approach to coaching.

6   **Trevor** had over 30 years professional coaching experience: "It was '82 and…there was a

7   vacancy at youth level and the head coach offered me the youth team coach's job".

8   Previously Trevor had played professionally but his playing career was cut short though

9   injury: "Well, I got in the game as a trainee up in 1970…After six years well, I got injured

10 and sort of retired really". Trevor expressed clear views about coaching: "I was always very

11 much aware of the player being the most important person and not me as the coach…I

12 needed to give them more ownership".

13 **Mike** had twelve years coaching experience. Mike was qualified as a coach educator and

14 tutor and was able to tutor to level 3 (second highest level of certification). He had a degree

15 in sport science and had worked as a tutor in Higher Education: "I've worked in an

16 educational setting at a university as a lecturer as well as delivering coach education for the

17 SGB and coaching part-time at the club." His approach to coaching was also expressed

18 clearly from the outset:

19 "Coaching is like teaching, is around personal relationships, time, getting to know people,

20 understanding where they are, where they need to go, where they want to go, being able to

21 shape that".

22 **Phil** had coached full-time for fifteen years but had "thirty years coaching in an elite

23 environment". Phil was qualified as a coach educator and tutor and was able to tutor to level

24 four. For some of the coach education awards "I didn't complete them as a candidate, I

25 completed them as a tutor". He had a degree in physical education and had worked as a PE

teacher, and his views about coaching had some similarities to Trevor's: "It's too much about the coach, it needs to be more about the players, if the players get ownership then there's a better chance".

Norman had obtained the highest level of coach certification available in his sport, and had 20 years' playing and coaching experience. His coaching career had been characterised by short-term contracts, full-time/part-time hours and job instability. Prior to securing the coach educator role, Norman had worked in the sports development sector and he identified this as a key influence on his approach to coaching:

"I've really been influenced by the Balyi stuff, in terms of long term player development. Every player has potential, and if I as the coach can get them to their potential…there isn't a ceiling. That's what I like about the model, it's not elitist".

Norman also noted that education opportunities provided by the SGB had been influential, teaching him that "learning can be messy you are allowed to make mistakes. Coaches need to consider different ways of doing things".

Research Design and Procedures

Central were the coach educators (CEs) and each CE delivered coach development opportunities to a cluster of professional sport clubs (5 clubs per cluster). To capture processes constraining or enabling educator practise, the study drew upon a 3-stage design where data were collected over twelve months and in three main phases:

• Phase 1 (month 1): individual, semi-structured coach educator interviews (n=4) collecting personal narratives – interviews ranged between 60 and 120 minutes and were conducted within the CE's cluster. A focus group with all four coach educators was conducted at the SGB offices and lasted 180 minutes.

• Phase 2 (months 2-11): Participant observation in a sample of clubs from each of the clusters (n=8) to observe coaches and understand the challenges educators encountered in

1 clubs to support coaches – field note data were collected. In addition, semi-structured

2 interviews were conducted with Academy Directors (n=9) and coaches (n= 32) *in situ*.

3 Academy Directors were important gatekeepers to the CE's work (see findings) as well as

4 having extensive coaching and coach education experiences.

5 • Phase 3 (month 12): follow-up which repeated phase one, individual interviews with the

6 CEs, ranging from 60 to 120 minutes and a CE focus group lasting 180 minutes. Phase three

7 inteviews were conducted in a university setting.

8 Semi-structured individual interviews offered opportunities to gain an understanding

9 of each participant's views, enabling the line of enquiry to be modified, and underlying

10 motives to be investigated (Charmaz, 2006). This ensured that the respondents and

11 interviewer explored themes together, making the process reflexive (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004).

12 The focus groups were a data-gathering technique that allowed systematic questioning of the

13 CEs simultaneously (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Focus groups were used to investigate what the

14 participants thought and also to probe the reasons *why* the participants thought as they did

15 (Krueger & Casey, 2014). As a result, CEs were brought together in an environment that

16 represented a "collective remembering" (Kitzinger, 1994, p.105) in terms of commonality of

17 shared experiences. For example, discussions were prompted on issues such as: What is

18 effective coach education? What are your views on learning? Do you have views on how

19 people learn best/most effectively? In this case, the spontaneous interaction of focus group

20 members produced insights not obtained readily from the individual interviews and helped

21 understand how the CEs contextualized, and categorized phenomena (Stewart & Shamdasani,

22 2014). The design of the study facilitated the linking of data from different sources and over

23 time, allowing an identification of the layers of the case (Yin, 2013). This approach resulted

24 in layers of collaborative evidence that was used to increase understanding, but was no

25 guarantee of 'validity' in traditional terms.

1   *Data Analysis*

2   Data analysis was grounded conceptually and empirically in the ideas and objectives

3   informing the research and in observations about relationships in the data. Specifically, the

4   analytic process involved three overlapping phases, each with increasing levels of abstraction

5   meaning that data were analysed thematically, using an approach similar to grounded theory.

6   First, data were inductively examined and organized into a system of themes representing the

7   CEs' practices within active, unfolding contexts. Second, classification of themes was used to

8   produce an ordered descriptive account of the experiences of the CEs and the context of their

9   practice. This was done to gain an insight into, and to outline, the characteristics of CEs'

10   practice and their dispositions that were developed and developing. Although these

11   descriptions highlighted the various relationships and processes under study, they did not

12   capture fully the complexity of CEs' practices. Consequently, Bourdieu's work was

13   employed as a third level of analysis in order to situate the data within a theoretical

14   framework that enabled a move from concrete description to abstraction (cf. Cushion &

15   Jones, 2012). Doing so, increased the understanding of the relationship between the social

16   actors and structures under study, and how they interacted to produce and reproduce coaching

17   and coach education discourses. Importantly, the use of a theoretical framework was not a

18   rigid prejudgment as to how to read the data ('correctly'), but a process of supporting

19   analysis and interpretation (cf. Cushion & Jones, 2012). As Bourdieu suggests theory is a

20   construct which takes shape for and by empirical work (Wacquant, 1989). Thus, the data

21   analysis was not viewed as a singular event but instead can be better conceptualized as an

22   iterative process between data and theory.

23   Data are reported integrated with the analysis. Integration — the interaction or

24   conversation between the different components of a study — is an important aspect of mixed

1   methods research (O'Cathain, Murphy & Nicholl, 2010). This approach enabled all the data

2   collected within the case to be studied together, focusing attention on themes within the

3   study. Allowing data to be examined in detail for example, comparing interview, focus group

4   and field note data from different respondents in different contexts within the case provided

5   attention to surprises and paradoxes between types of data as well as patterns across the case.

6   This created what O'Cathain et al. (2010) describes as conversational threads that run

7   through the analysis but link the components of the research together in the main themes; the

8   coaching field – learning in context(s), CE Dispositons – habitus, practice and learning, and

9   Athlete (player) Centred discourse.

10   **Analysis & Discussion**

11   **The Coaching Field – learning in context(s)**

12   *CE contexts – the structure of the field*

13   Learning and teaching are inextricably linked to, embedded within and influenced by the

14   nature and nuances of their contexts (Fenwick, Edwards & Sawchuk, 2015). The CE's

15   contexts can be analysed in terms of Bourdieu's field; "networks of social relations,

16   structured systems of social positions within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over

17   resources, stakes and access" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.98). Fields, according to Bourdieu (1990a)

18   are semi-autonomous, and characterised by their own determinate agents (CEs, club, coaches,

19   players, SGB, leagues), its own accumulation of history, its own logic of action and it various

20   forms of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Fields are not objective in the sense of

21   clearly delimited and drawn frontiers but can be seen as a structured system of social

22   positions that define the situation for its occupants (Bourdieu, 1984a). The limits of a field

23   are found where the effects of the field cease, hence, agents are situated across multiple

24   fields, each with specific "cultural conditions which produce social norms and expectancies,

25   or normalising practices" (Bourdieu, 1998; Blackett et al., 2015, p. 7). As Bourdieu (1998)

1   suggested, socially constituted interests only exist in relation to a socially constituted space

2   and differentiation within social fields is not solely concerned with macro issues and

3   oppositions, thus an analysis of CE practice is flawed without an understanding of social

4   context and the positioning of individuals within local fields (Grenfell & James, 1998).

5   The CEs, and hence practice and learning, were embedded in complex matrices

6   of social relations, relational contexts and cultural arrangements, with CEs ever dialogically

7   engaged. These can be considered horizontally across the coaching field [clubs, the sport

8   governing body, leagues], and vertically, so not only fields of organisations [clubs] but

9   organisations [clubs] as fields (Bourdieu, 2005). The CEs pointed out that not only were each

10   of their clusters of clubs very different (horizontal), the individual clubs within cases were

11   different (vertical):

12   Phil: My big two [clubs], purely qualifications. Purely you deliver what we can't 'cause

13   they believe they've got the best…[But] at the other three, 'cause they've got less

14   experienced staff, and they know that my experience is a lot bigger than theirs…

15   Mike: How big is the gap between the bottom and the top...

16   Phil: Massive.

17   Norman:...what's being delivered and the type of stuff that's going on?

18   Trevor: At the very, very top you've got Coach Education Department with three

19   people running it; they have individual development programmes for the coaches.

20   They have five hours a week to go and work at that. They have a Life Skills Coach

21   who comes in and speaks to them every month, so they're miles in front. At the other

22   end you've got coaches who haven't even qualified to do the job they're doing. So, I've

23   got a massive, massive [variation]… (CEs Focus Group)

24   Therefore, it is crucial to consider the totality of CEs and not consider their practice and

25   learning as uniform, or simply as the sum of individual agents and their 'interaction' within

1   an organisation or group – but as an organisation of social forces, individual agents and

2   collections of agents located in relation to one another – relationality was central.

3   Importantly, the coaching field and the clubs therein "all follow specific logics" (Bourdieu

4   & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97), with their own unique stakes, and distinctive dynamics, providing

5   their own rules and regularities requiring CEs negotiation. Hence, the CE's role was highly

6   variable depending on the club's status and resources, and its own perceived 'tradition' and

7   'expertise' in youth development.

8   Interviewer: How do you see the CE within your club?

9   Academy Director: Well, first of all, the word 'within' is dangerous, 'cause we

10   wouldn't be within!

11   Interviewer: Okay.

12   Academy Director: Okay. He would be 'outside', supporting us with our qualifications.

13   Now, our circumstances could be unique...The CE could not come and start telling

14   anybody what to do. It doesn't work that way. He's invited in as our guest, as our

15   support person.

16

17   "I told him that he could come in but he wasn't going to change anything as we have

18   our own way of doing things and our way is the right way" (Academy Director)

19   "So, in a few of my clubs they've got their own identity and their own philosophy. If I

20   go in and, like, do what I think I've got to be careful that I'm not contradicting their

21   philosophy." (Trevor)

22   Because obviously we've set our programme really regardless of what the SGB are

23   wanting us to do. We're doing it for the Club –and what we feel is right for the Club…

24   look at the results we've had players who've made it to the first team, obviously it

25   works. (Academy Manager)

1   Therefore, each club was a crucial mediating context wherein external factors or changing

2   circumstances were brought to bear on CEs' practices and learning. The structure of fields

3   both "undergirds and guides individuals' strategies whereby they seek, individually and

4   collectively, to safeguard or improve their position" (Bourdieu cited in Wacquant 1989, p.

5   40). In this respect "the field is very much a field of struggles" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992,

6   p. 101).

7   ***CE Practice, Capital and Power***

8   Crucially, struggle characterized the CEs' work not as benign or neutral but as a series of

9   power relations where positions in the field, in their respective clubs, were viewed as more-

10   or-less dominant or subordinate, reflecting access to capital. Capital occurs in a number of

11   forms; economic, cultural (e.g. educational credentials), social (e.g. social position and

12   connections), symbolic (from honour and prestige) and is a form of power (Portes &

13   Vickstrom, 2011). Within the field(s) capital was unequally distributed, with different

14   positions having differing amounts and types of capital. A voice requires a certain position

15   (capital) within the field to be heard and listened to (cf. Cushion, et al., 2003).

16   "It's because he's [CE] been in the Academy structure he understands how it works."

17   (Coach)

18   "I'm not there to challenge their...either their role within the club or the way in which

19   they deal with their staff. They know me as a person, I've known all of them for ten or

20   fifteen years at least and some for more. I'd got a background that said, well, actually

21   you've done it for 15 years".(Phil)

22   "I don't feel there was any questions over me because of where I'd worked in the past

23   which was an advantage". (Norman)

24   Therefore, a crucial issue in understanding the success or failure of the CE's practice and

25   of learning was linked to the possession of capital – and therefore power. Key was symbolic

1   capital that arises from the other forms, is converted when it is deemed legitimate in the field,

2   and is found in the form of prestige, renown, reputation and personal authority (English &

3   Bolton, 2016). Possession of symbolic capital and control over its legitimation enables the

4   setting of the parameters for knowledge production to which everyone is required to tacitly

5   respond. Symbolic capital gives the "power to consecrate" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23) and

6   impose the legitimate vision of the world. CEs were embedded in clubs engaged in

7   conservation strategies, to safeguard or even enhance their position (in relation to other

8   clubs). Clubs were an internal space of struggle for organisational power over the capacity to

9   determine which capital was the most influential in defining its activities and formulating its

10   policies. Therefore, holders of cultural and social capital struggled for power, including CEs,

11   the Leagues, and the SGB, as each had differing conceptions of a club's legitimate goals,

12   activities and policies.

13   "It goes deeper than the SGB, the clubs are insular, one club down the road will be

14   completely different to another one saying 'what are they doing that's better than us?."

15   (Mike)

16   "Right but are (Club x) interested in that, no. (Club x) haven't got one iota of interest in

17   the others or the SGB, but they are very, very interested in getting ahead themselves"

18   (Trevor)

19   I mean, it's even got to a point where people now, in the clubs, aren't sure. They used

20   to strike out against the SGB. 'Well, why aren't the SGB doing it? But now, all of a

21   sudden, it's, 'hang on a minute, is it the SGB or is it the League?' (Mike)

22

23   "There's always this, this, sort of...I don't know, suspicion, close on paranoia. You

24   know, if ever you had a contact from the SGB it was deemed that you'd done

25   something wrong, or why are they looking at us?" (Trevor)

1   "The club warn you about CPD put on by the SGB its long winded and I'm told I'm

2   going to see something different, and I don't." (Coach)

3   Holders of the dominant symbolic capital oppose others' legitimation of their capital,

4   and struggles and contestation over symbolic authority are the most significant (Emirbayer &

5   Johnson, 2008). This was a key challenge for the CEs and was crucial to the success of their

6   role given that the successful gain a dominant position. The coaching field brought together

7   holders of a variety of social (e.g. position within the club) and cultural capital (e.g. previous

8   playing or coaching experience, coaching and educational qualifications), and conflict arose

9   over which was most highly esteemed. That is, different types of social and cultural capital

10   commanded different levels of respect and deference (credentials, qualifications, successful

11   playing and/or coaching experience) and acted as symbolic capital conferring advantages on

12   its holders.

13   "I've been doing it for thirty five years………working in the pro game. I understand

14   the pro game, I understand the youth development pro game. I knew I had a head start,

15   because they all know me [academies]...that's the thing..." (Trevor)

16

17   This meant that CEs were not simply or unproblematically 'delivering' coach

18   education in a supportive environment, but were engaged in a dynamic struggle over the

19   representation and definitions of the social world, as well as over access to valued resources.

20   Their position in fields were objects of struggle and important in framing practice and

21   learning. This was a "classification struggle" (Bourdieu, 1984b, p.164), and for the CEs

22   centered on the capacity to appropriate and impose legitimate names and categorisations for

23   coaching and coach education. The CEs engaged in symbolic work within clubs attempting to

24   create symbolic power through the transformation of practices, appropriating symbolic

1   capital as a form of power not perceived as power, but as legitimate demands for recognition,

2   deference, obedience or the service of others (Bourdieu, 1990).

3   "The most important thing is the academy manager, and what they want. If they want

4   to coach in this style, that's the way they coach. Not what the way me as the CE says

5   or the SGB says" (Norman).

6   "You know, he's[CE] always calling up and making sure that the staff that we've got

7   are up to date with things and he keeps on top of it, which is good. If I've got the CE

8   there telling me that such and such needs to get on this course, needs to get this

9   qualification done" (Academy Manager).

10   "So a significant amount of time's been spent with the individual coaches – I designed

11   it in that way for a two-fold effect really – well, more than two-fold but – so obviously,

12   meet the course requirements, but to get to know the coaches better, win them over"

13   (Mike)

14   The CEs were engaging in creating and recreating difference; where the basis of identity

15   and hierarchy were endlessly disputed and contested. Within fields all parties (coaches, CEs,

16   clubs, Leagues, SGB) tried to maximise their possession of capital and had an interest in the

17   reproduction of those conditions. As a result, each worked to discredit "the form of capital

18   upon which the force of their opponent's rests and often try to valorize the capital they

19   preferentially possess or support" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 99).

20   Interviewer: Can you describe the impact that the CE's had on your coaching

21   programme?

22   Academy Manager: None.

23   Interviewer: None?

24   Academy manager: No, we – I'll be – we've probably – we've asked the CE when he

25   comes in on the support days to reinforce *our* coaching programme.

1   "I told the club, I'm not an SGB person, I don't do it the SGB way, I don't like the

2   courses, I generally don't. I don't believe the way we teach is right. I don't think the

3   way we bring coaches through is right". (Trevor)

4   "I was told I could come in but wasn't going to change anything as they (the club) have

5   their own way of doing things and their way is the right way" (Norman).

6   "When I first came across the CE, and asked who that is…..'oh it's Mike from the

7   SGB. Straight away I was defensive". (Coach)

8   The nature of these varied, relational, dynamic social microcosms illustrates something of

9   the difficulties for the CEs in organisational contexts that attempted to legitimise specific

10   practices and militated or feared perceived interference from outside. External forces and

11   developments (CEs and their coaching) were necessarily refracted through the prism of a

12   variety of specific interests.

13   To be successful, therefore, CEs had to be capable of imposing themselves as

14   legitimate spokespersons and delegates within fields, and to distinguish and distance

15   themselves from others within the field by symbolically position-taking; e.g. type of work,

16   service, acts, arguments. This, however, only had meaning with reference to a CE's position

17   and trajectory within a club, so not all action had similar meaning in all clubs.

18   "Now, I've just tried to give information, give examples from the professional game,

19   say, 'Look, that's what we did there,' without using the name of the other club. Just

20   say, 'Well, look, that's my experience. Now where does that fit your...?' and then try

21   and link it into their club". (Phil)

22   "The CEs been different and it's opened people's eyes a little bit, we have….. our set

23   way of doing things and suddenly everyone's thought, hang on…he's challenged that

24   way of doing things" (Coach)

1	 The CEs were faced with both an integrative struggle and a reproductive struggle

2	(Bourdieu, 1984a). For example, the CEs had to align their professional practices with those

3	demanded by the contexts, but paradoxically this helped create and re-create the coaching

4	field, giving certain practices an entrenched legitimacy and challenging the CEs as agents of

5	change. Hence, the space of position-taking for the CEs was a 'space of possibilities'

6	(Bourdieu, 1996c) but also as a space of impossibilities where the cultural structure in some

7	clubs imposed constraints, limiting what could be attempted or accomplished.

8	 "We have to strike this balance between personal views and what we bring in because

9	 that's dangerous '…if you do go in strong and say 'I think you should be doing this',

10	 well… we have to be really careful" (Trevor).

11	 "As an academy director etc, etc, you all know me, if you don't want me to bring

12	 anything of me in, I'll leave it at the back door, I won't bring it in". (Norman)

13	 "I said to the director, if your staff don't like what they see, tell them to leave it alone.

14	 If you don't like what you see, tell me, and we'll leave it alone". (Phil)

15	

16	 **CE Dispositons – Habitus, practice and learning**

17	CEs were engaged in a process of practice improvisation structured by cultural orientations,

18	personal goals and the ability to play the game of social interaction. To understand this

19	Bourdieu's concept of habitus is useful. Habitus is the "durably inculcated system of

20	structured, structuring dispositions" found within a field (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.52); it is the

21	"social inscribed in the body…a feel for or sense of the 'social game'…the source of most

22	practices…a tendency to generate regulated behaviours" (Bourdieu, 1962, p.11). Habitus is

23	the combination of a social actor's deeply ingrained identity and their less fixed, occupational

24	identity. As a structured space, the field tends to structure habitus, while the habitus tends to

25	structure the perceptions of the field (Bourdieu, 1990b). In this case, habitus acted as a

1   unifying and internalised cultural code for the CEs, as well as characterizing types of

2   practice.

3   The CEs' habitus can be traced back to their early (or earlier experienced) practices

4   and, unsurprisingly, the CE's knowledge and action were rooted in their personal experiences

5   of coaching and coach education. Thus, CEs were key agents in the production of practice as

6   they represented the embodied link between experienced and internalised past and present

7   practice. Indeed, the CEs highlighted the depth and importance of these experiences. For

8   example, Trevor remarked, "I've worked for 30 years in the sport and I've actually done it"

9   later commenting that "I've got a ton of experience". While Norman stated, "This is what

10   I've done, coaching and coach education, this is my experience. Mike commented on the

11   practices of the group "We've all been…been shaped by obviously, a lot of past-experience

12   here".

13   Habitus disposes actors to behave in ways that have legitimacy within the field and

14   are embedded with a series of material and symbolic 'legitimations' around rituals, language

15   and notions of difference that obscures power relations, making them unrecognisable to, and

16   misrecognised by agents (Swartz, 2012). Therefore, CEs acted out relations of domination

17   embodied in and perpetuated by the dispositions of the habitus. 'Doxa' – the conditions of

18   existence or the order of things – became perceived as acceptable, natural, self-evident and

19   legitimate (Bourdieu, 2005). In this study, it was the knowledge acquired from practice that

20   was privileged (structuring) while CEs' experiences created a framework for understanding

21   and delivering learning that was also shaped by the learning culture of the sport and their

22   biographies (structured).

23   "He's [CE] got to be able to show some sort of pedigree, some sort of experience, some

24   sort of knowledge in our field of expertise." (Academy Manager)

1 "Mine's just the practicality of fifteen years in the real game, the players that I worked

2 with I've worked with them for fifteen years prior to that. That's the way players are

3 going to learn best, it works. I just did fifteen years of practical coaching in the real

4 game" (Norman).

5 "I've worked for twenty-six years in education and coaching and teaching and that's

6 possibly the time to say, 'Well ok.' When I actually bring across information I can go

7 back on personal experiences and say, 'Well actually we did do this and this is what we

8 got, it worked.' You can go back onto your experiences because it's very easy as a tutor

9 to put out information…but it's because I've actually done it and can say this works"

10 (Phil).

11 I like what he has to say, he's (CE) got loads of experience in the game and knows

12 what works. (Coach)

13 While habitus provides the mediating link between social structure (macro) and individual

14 action (the micro), there is a further micro level. This can be described as the "postulates and

15 axioms, or, even more fundamentally the binary oppositions, labels and categories used to

16 lend meaning to the world" (Everett, 2002, p.66), the basis for the common-sense, taken-for-

17 granted logic of the field (doxa). In this study, this involved classification schemes built upon

18 a fundamental binary logic of inclusion and exclusion dividing and grouping items into

19 opposing classes and hence generating meanings (Swartz, 2012). For the CEs, binaries

20 included, for example, professional/non-professional, academic/non-academic,

21 experience/education, theory/practice, good coaching/bad coaching, coach-centered /athlete

22 (player) centered. Such distinctions became the classification lenses through which CEs

23 perceived the social world and gave it meaningful order while serving a social function of

24 differentiation and legitimation.

1   Symbolic distinctions correlated with social distinctions, turning symbolic

2   classifications into expressions of social hierarchy. For example, that only 'practical

3   experience' was needed – legitimating past experiences – was an approach the CEs

4   reinforced and elevated, thus also distancing themselves from academic theory.

5   Consequently, the CEs pursued strategies that attempted to maintain or improve their

6   positions, were richest in particular symbolic capital (e.g. previous experience, SGB

7   qualifications), and invested in this to their advantage while actively downplaying other

8   capital. The CEs sought to preserve the field but struggled over its control. Bourdieu (1987d)

9   depicts such conflict as those who defend 'orthodoxy' against those who advocate 'heresy'.

10   Challenges to common sense or doxa comes from heterodox discourses and results in efforts

11   to defend the doxa. The key heterodoxic discourse in this case was from academic theory.

12   The outcome of this was a pervasive anti-intellectualism, reinforced by a disdain for anything

13   informed by research. The CEs pursued strategies that were both practical and dispositional

14   through an anti-intellectual stance and the rejection of theoretical matters, thereby defending

15   doxa and legitimating, defending, or improving their position in the field, and their capacity

16   to legitimate social arrangements (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

17   "I'm not an academic I'm more a practitioner, that's what I do. I'm coming from a non-

18   theorist point of view, I'm reading a few books, it sounds like I'm an academic but I

19   don't like reading books, not because I want to start quoting a lot of theory stuff"

20   (Phil).

21   "I got this myself through practice, I didn't read a book, because I don't read books!"

22   (Trevor).

23   "Last few years, working practically, I'm not a theorist. I don't do research. I don't,

24   mine's practical" (Norman).

1   "My approach to learning, it's not because of my great academic knowledge and

2   because I've read a million books, it's not that" (Mike).

3   The CEs were positioned as cultural intermediaries at the intersection of fields, the SGB,

4   Leagues, the clubs and the coaches working therein, and pursued activities reflective of this

5   position and their institutionalised habitus. Bourdieu (1998a) described the monopoly of the

6   universal evident in the logic of the field, demonstrated in this case by the SGBs' control of

7   qualifications and the Leagues' 'licensing' of Academies. The CEs had to negotiate a clash

8   between the the universal and the the local in respect of the logic of their work, and were

9   arbitrating between the values and beliefs of stakeholders (clubs, SGB, Leagues), viewing

10   themselves as the embodiment of coach education's collective values as their own values

11   which were consciously or sub-consciously lived out through their practice.

12   "Cause I do believe in the process and I believe I'm doing this job for two reasons.

13   One, I was doing a lot of the things in the first place. I just did it because I thought it

14   was the best way" (Phil)

15   The CEs were 'reflective' not reflexive, where reflection had become a process of

16   rationalising and reconfirming ideas. While the CEs were willing to share and present

17   knowledge, they were unwilling to open it up to *critical* reflection thus resisting heterodoxic

18   discourses resulting instead in the production and reproduction of orthodox discourses.

19

20   **'Athlete (player) centered' discourse**

21   "We'll be looking for a player-centered culture" (Mike)

22   "It suits the way I coach, the way I believe in because it's player-centred.

23   It's too much about the coach it needs to be more about the players, player-

24   centred." (Trevor).

1   "Because good coach education is what we're doing, it becomes

2   personalised all in the needs of the individual player, player-centered."

3   (Phil).

4   The CEs were united in their approach to learning, considering 'player-centred-ness' and

5   'player ownership of learning' as an orthodox discourse and the cornerstones of what they

6   did. However, data showed that CEs' notions of player-centred coaching were a conflation of

7   sometimes contradictory philosophies, positions, methodologies, and ideologies under a

8   broad banner of 'player-centered' around 'playing' (i.e. styles of game play), 'coaching', and

9   'learning'.

10   "I deliver information, I put information out. So visually, auditory, how I actually start

11   to deliver the information" (Phil).

12   "So, I very rarely stop practice, it's based around challenges, it's based around

13   discovery, it's based around filling the players with information, you know, the set up

14   is done, the organisation is done. Then give chances to make mistakes in trial and

15   error" (Norman).

16   "It will be for them to find, and solve problems as they get to a different stage to take

17   them to the next bit, and so on, and so on" (Trevor).

18   Interviewer: So how do they learn in that way?

19   Trevor: "Player ownership…and I didn't go on a course to learn it!"

20   "The process is a problem-solving approach, go through a sort of problem-solving

21   cognitive approach. That's what we need to try and shape the coaches to do too.

22   Impact the learning environment and give the coach more knowledge to put over

23   information to help learning" (Mike).

24   As a concept, therefore, 'player-centered' can be described as "polymorphic, supple and

25   adaptable, rather than defined, calibrated and used rigidly" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1997,

1   p.23). The CEs agreed their role was to present a 'player-centred' approach. However, this

2   was an organised assemblage of meanings and practices and, for the CEs, a dominant system

3   of meanings or ideology. 'Player-centered' was also symbolic, and not only an instrument of

4   knowledge but an instrument of domination. The CEs decided what was player centered,

5   what that looked like, and therefore how the social world should be perceived and, as

6   Bourdieu and Wacquant (1997) argue, engaged in a struggle to impose the definition of the

7   world most congruent with their interests. Thus, as the data suggests the CEs imposed a wide-

8   ranging definition of 'player-centered'. However, adherence to the ideology of 'player-

9   centred' practice in fact imposed learning related to language, meanings and symbolic

10 systems with the CEs 'misrecognising' the arbitrary and culturally derived nature of their

11 practice.

12   The dispositions of CEs to push for greater player autonomy positioned them with

13 specific skills and knowledge that were rare and valuable, enabling them to maximise this

14 capital to advance in the field. Because of their unconscious commitment to the rules of the

15 game (Swartz, 2012), the CEs rationalised their actions as being in the best interest of the

16 clubs and the game. Moreover, the CE's authority was backed by institutional forces

17 including their experience, qualifications, and the SGB that had legitimised their position.

18 Thus, the CEs acted as agents of a selective tradition and cultural incorporation, where

19 practices and learning had become normalized and legitimised.

20

21 **Conclusion**

22 As Patton, Parker and Neutzling (2012) argue in professional development programmes little

23 is known about the role of the developer/ educator. Findings of the current study showed that

24 the educators' role, task functions and understanding did not exist in isolation, but were part

25 of a broader relational system in which they had meaning. In other words, CEs' practices

1   were both structured by, and structuring of, the context. Importantly, the success or failure of

2   the CEs was inextricably linked to power as each field was a field of struggles, and CEs had

3   to play a symbolic and relational game being defined by and, at the same time, struggling to

4   define these relations. Hence practice and learning for the CEs was both social and embodied.

5   Consequently, the CE's role and processes were neither benign nor neutral and were

6   constructed from a myriad of power relations and interactions in contextualised social

7   practice. In addition, each club context was different meaning that facilitating the learning of

8   coaches involved recognising that what was needed or 'worked' in one context could not

9   simply or unproblematically transfer to another.

10   In a particularly crowded professional development space (SGB, Clubs, League)

11   coach educators needed to possess appropriate symbolic and social capital. Therefore, to

12   enhance and strengthen their position in the field, CEs often aligned with coaching practice

13   ideology that reproduced rather than challenged existing coach education ideology and

14   rhetoric and this resulted in a reinforced anti-intellectual orthodoxy. Consequently, there was

15   a way of talking about coaching and learning to coach that became affirmed and reproduced

16   through uncritical CE practice, and coach educators had a vested interest in controlling and

17   maintaining a particular body of knowledge.

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