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The reproduction of 'coaching culture': A Bourdieusian analysis of a formalised coach mentoring programme.

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Abstract

Despite its positive rhetoric, formalised coach mentoring can be problematic due to the institutional agendas of National Governing Bodies (NGB), with mentoring functioning as a method to reproduce organisational cultures and beliefs. This research attempted to explore this issue in greater depth by critically analysing a formalised coach mentoring programme. Fourteen mentors and four mentees participated in semi-structured interviews to discuss their experiences of a NGB's formalised mentoring programme. Analysed through a Bourdieusian lens, the findings present formalised coach mentoring as a source of cultural reproduction, where mentors embodied a group habitus that reinforced the NGB's dispositions and beliefs towards coaching practice. Mentors strived to inculcate mentees and rework their habituses to align with the field's doxa through a process of pedagogic action, with symbolic capital proving influential in reproducing coaching ideologies. NGBs should begin to critically analyse their coach mentoring provision to maximise opportunities for mentee learning and development.

Keywords: *formalised mentoring, sports coaching, Bourdieu, coach education, reproduction, coach learning.*

Introduction

More sophisticated approaches to understanding how coaches learn has resulted in a move beyond the simplistic identification of 'learning situations' (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). When considering coach development, formalised National Governing Body (NGB) coach education courses have traditionally been positioned as the primary medium through which coaches are trained and certified to work within the field (Lyle & Cushion, 2017; Piggott, 2012). However, this provision has been subject to a number of criticisms (e.g. Cushion et al., 2010), with the relevancy of course content often challenged as it does not resonate with the messy realities of coaching practice (Jones & Allison, 2014; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013). In particular, the design of formal coach education courses has been identified as being 'closed-circle' in nature (Piggott, 2012). Knowledge and practice are therefore accepted uncritically, which often results in coaches complying with and reproducing a NGB enforced professional dogma to secure accreditation (Chesterfield, Potrac, & Jones, 2010). This dogma may take the form of a promoted coaching philosophy, a prescribed method of delivery, a preference for a particular coaching approach, or aspects of a NGB's sporting culture (Cushion & Nelson, 2013; Piggott, 2012). From this perspective, formal coach education can be a powerful socialising agent for coaches as they move through the coaching field (Lyle & Cushion, 2017).

In addressing these criticisms and to move away from overly prescriptive approaches to coach education, there have been recommendations for NGB's to include in situ learning opportunities within their educational provision (Nelson et al., 2013). The coach learning literature has shown that coaches place value on experiential learning through interactions with other coaches (e.g. Cushion & Nelson, 2013; Jones & Allison, 2014; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006, inter-alia). One pedagogical tool which incorporates in situ

learning is mentoring. For twenty years scholars have called for the implementation of mentoring programmes to support contextualised coach development (e.g. Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Nelson et al., 2013). Although nuanced and contextually bound (Jones, Miles, & Harris, 2009), mentoring within sports coaching typically involves a supportive and facilitative relationship between two or more coaches. Mentoring relationships are either formal or informal in nature, with formalised mentoring occurring in a structured environment authorised through institutions to increase its consistency and effectiveness (Wright & Smith, 2000). Whereas, informal mentoring occurs when relationships develop naturally in an unstructured manner, beyond direct organisational control (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 2006).

McQuade, Davis, and Nash (2015) have identified how the UK Coaching Certificate[1] (UKCC) has recently sanctioned formalised mentoring programmes across a range of sports, with many NGB's obliging due to mentoring's association with developing coaching knowledge (Jones et al., 2009). However, mentoring is not without its issues, with Sawiuk, Taylor, and Groom (2018) acknowledging that formalised coach mentoring programmes are frequently plagued by institutional agendas often connected to funding constraints. Individuals are socialised into accepting coaching norms, whilst empirical data is collected which satisfies institutional objectives (Sawiuk et al., 2018). Despite calls for further development of formalised mentoring programmes (e.g. Koh, Bloom, Fairhurst, Paiement, Kee, 2014; Fairhurst, Bloom, Harvey, 2017) these initiatives may pose challenges, resulting in the reproduction of external NGB interests (Jones et al., 2009). Indeed, Jones and Allison (2014, p. 120) have suggested that mentoring "appears to have remained at the assumed or even abstract level of rhetoric". There remains a need

to explicitly explore the impact of mentoring, whether positive or negative (Cushion, 2015).

Mentoring is a social construction, involving power relations and interests of varying stakeholders, with mentoring practices determined by social structures and trends (Cushion, 2015). The role of power relations within mentoring has been previously highlighted by Cushion and colleagues (2003), where it was argued neophyte coaches serve an 'apprenticeship of observation' when in the presence of more experienced and therefore powerful coaches. Consequently, novice coaches are often "initiated into the traditions, habits, rules, cultures and practices" of that coaching environment (Merriam, 1983, p. 37). In building upon this notion, recent Foucauldian inspired research has begun to shed light on how both pastoral and disciplinary concepts of power operate within formalised coach mentoring programmes, which may direct mentee coaching practices to align with their mentors' normalised beliefs (e.g. Leeder, 2019; Zehntner & McMahon, 2019). Coach mentors are instrumental in defining legitimate knowledge within the mentoring process, where through a process of social editing mentors may 'choose' to espouse particular coaching practices and beliefs whilst disregarding alternatives (Cushion, 2015). Accordingly, through engagements with their mentor who possesses an unequal access to 'knowledge', a mentee may imitate legitimised behaviours, leading to an uncritical reproduction of coaching cultures. While mentoring is often presented as a panacea to overcome current professional development dilemmas within coach education (Griffiths, 2011), the workings of power within it means that its outcomes may run contrary to those intended - a process of socialisation that reinforces rather than challenges existing coaching practice.

Whilst individuals who experience mentoring are generally positive about the process (Lyle & Cushion, 2017) there remains an assumption of mentoring's benign and

‘positive’ nature. However, this research challenges such a perspective and adds to the literature by investigating critically how mentoring may act to reproduce entrenched coaching cultures and beliefs. The aim of the present research therefore was to explore in greater depth the extent of socialising and reproductive elements within formalised coach mentoring. Through examining mentor practice and its influence on mentee learning this study was guided by the following broad research questions: How are a NGB’s organisational beliefs and coaching culture reproduced through formalised coach mentoring provision? How does a NGB’s coaching culture structure the enactment and outcomes of a formalised mentoring programme?

To enhance our understanding further the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu was applied as his concepts provide a “set of thinking tools visible through the results they yield” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 15), helping to explain the complex power-ridden relationships which occur within mentoring and coaching environments. To date, Bourdieu’s theoretical tools have been utilised to some extent within the sports coaching literature. For instance, Cushion, Griffiths, and Armour (2019) have identified how coach educators may reproduce legitimised cultures through their embodied dispositions, whilst further work by Cushion and Jones (2006, 2014) has examined the concept of cultural reproduction within professional football academies. However, research considering mentoring as a specific social productive and reproductive practice is currently limited. Thus, this research explores how a formalised coach mentoring programme may contribute to the reproduction of a ‘coaching culture’ through adopting a Bourdieusian lens. Importantly, the described ‘coaching culture’ was not the focus of the research and its impact on coaching practice, which may indeed promote positive coaching pedagogies, was not evaluated. The purpose here was to investigate the manner in which mentoring practice functions as a socialising agent to reproduce cultural beliefs.

Throughout the discussion, Bourdieu's concepts were woven into the analysis to increase the growing sociological literature on coach mentoring (see Leeder, 2019; Sawiuk et al., 2018; Zehntner & McMahon, 2019). The value of this work lays in addressing the need for more empirical research on coach mentoring programmes (cf. Bloom, 2013; Jones et al., 2009) and attempting to uncover the 'taken-for-granted' of mentoring within formalised provision. By investigating the reproductive element of mentoring, it is hoped our current understanding towards formalised mentoring provision for coach learning can be improved.

Theoretical framework

To understand social practices such as mentoring, Bourdieu's key concepts can help articulate the dialogue and interactions between the deep-rooted antinomies of objective vs subjective and structure vs agency (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). To capture the objective and structuralist element the concept of field is used, defined as "a set of objective historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 16). For Bourdieu, the social world is divided into relational fields which respond to rules of functioning and institutions that define the relations among agents within them. Fields therefore incorporate objective structures, positions, rituals, interests and ways of being which are represented in the practices of the agents within that social space (Bourdieu, 1984). In this light, sport coaching can be viewed as a field, a site of cultural reproduction and socialisation where power dynamics exist as individuals strive to achieve certain objectives (Cushion, 2011; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). Bourdieu utilises the term doxa to explain how fields can develop "a set of shared opinions and unquestioned beliefs that bind participants together" (Wacquant, 2008, p. 70). A field's doxa can be internalised by individuals, working to reshape their thoughts and actions. Those in more dominant positions within fields look to defend the

doxa, pushing back its limits and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken-for-granted (Bourdieu, 1977).

Fields position individuals and social groups in accordance to the amount of capital they possess, which can contribute or transform the structure of the field (Bourdieu, 1998). The field of coaching can be considered a "field of struggles", where social agents strive to increase their accumulation of capital and coaching authority (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). Within the coaching field, various stakeholders including athletes, coaches, and NGB's compete to maintain or improve their position based upon their accrued capital (Cushion & Jones, 2014). Capital is a form of power operationalised primarily as economic, cultural, and social (Bourdieu, 1986). Whilst economic capital represents monetary investment, cultural capital is more complex and can be embodied through dispositions during socialisation, objectified in material possessions, and institutionalised within educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). Alternatively, social capital is obtained from one's position in society i.e. who they know and their membership to different social groups (Bourdieu, 1986). Within fields, forms of capital can become symbolic when they are recognised as worthy by those within that social space. Symbolic capital therefore relates to "the form that one or another of these species (economic, cultural, social) takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that recognise its specific logic" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). In coaching, symbolic capital is accredited to individuals who have acquired extensive practitioner experience (athlete or coach) in addition to high level coaching qualifications (e.g. Blackett, Evans, & Piggott, 2017; Cushion et al., 2019; Townsend & Cushion, 2017).

If field constitutes the objective and structuralist aspect of Bourdieu's praxeology, habitus incorporates the constructivist element, resulting in an ontologically complicit relationship (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus can be considered as "systems of

durable, transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53), which are developed through lasting exposure to specific social conditions. Constituted in practice, habitus is a product of objective regularities where social structures come to be embodied as schemes of perception through socialisation (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu uses the term hexis to denote the practical method of expressing one's dispositions, the embodied habitus brought to life through ways of feeling, thinking, and acting (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984). Habitus can be primary or secondary in nature, with primary habitus developed during an individual's early life experiences, whilst secondary habitus is developed later through education, training and employment contexts (Costa & Murphy, 2015). Principally the habitus helps illuminate how cultures are embodied, explaining how beliefs and dispositions can shape future practice. For example, the sports coaching literature has demonstrated how experience within coaching cultures can become embodied, influencing coaches' behaviours and practice (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2014). Whereas within mentoring contexts, a mentor may embody organisational beliefs, which are reproduced and espoused to their mentee during practice.

Bourdieu suggests an inclination towards practice, such as a coaching approach, is not an innate disposition. Instead, Bourdieu argues it is a cultural product that is learnt through a process of inculcation within educational systems (Jenkins, 2002). Bourdieu maintains these systems are the principle method through which cultural reproduction can occur, resulting in a process known as symbolic violence. Within social spaces, institutions are directly implicated in propagating a set of beliefs which become understood as arbitrary (Grenfell, 2007). In a Bourdieusian sense, for a culture to be considered as arbitrary, it must appear as natural within its imposition and content (Jenkins, 2002). Arbitrary cultures are therefore unchallenged and are accepted uncritically as power relations become misrecognised. Therefore, within fields those in

dominant positions can legitimise their cultural beliefs as natural, creating the necessary social conditions which allow institutions to fulfil their function. Indeed, within mentoring, it is possible the power dynamics between the mentor and mentee may result in forms of knowledge becoming valorised as arbitrary.

Bourdieu adopts the term symbolic violence to explain how cultures are imposed upon individuals or social groups in a manner experienced by the consumer as legitimate (Jenkins, 2002). Symbolic violence produces misrecognition, defined as "the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are, but in the form that renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). In the coaching field, research has shed light on how coaches (Cushion & Jones, 2014) alongside sporting directors (Blackett et al., 2017) attempt to legitimise their own practices and discourse to promote a 'right way' and maintain their status within fields. While within coach mentoring contexts, organisations may use mentors to promote their own institutional agendas, with mentees misrecognising the political process they are subjected to (Sawiuk et al., 2018). Due to their pedagogical authority, organisations can reproduce the unequal distribution of cultural capital via the function of pedagogic action, occurring through diffuse and institutionalised educational initiatives such as mentoring. Over time, social structures become reproduced through pedagogic work, referring to the procedure of a habitus becoming inculcated by an individual or group (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Through educational systems, dispositions are produced to generate 'correct responses'. Consequently, when symbolic violence becomes misrecognised by its consumers, cultural reproduction is said to occur (Jenkins, 2002).

As Cushion (2011) argues, Bourdieusian ideas can help illuminate mentoring as a contextualised, contested and embodied process which may act to reproduce the underlying structures that operate within fields of practice. Therefore, Bourdieu's work

offers an explanatory device for the reproduction of coaching cultures i.e. belief systems, practices, and ways of being within coaching contexts specifically within formalised coach mentoring provision. In short, this paper employs Bourdieu's social praxeology to help explore the "specific contribution that various forms of symbolic violence make to the reproduction and transformation of structures of domination" within a formalised coach mentoring programme (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 15).

Context

A UK based NGB developed a formalised coach mentoring programme to support 'grass roots' or 'participation domain' (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) coaches. The programme operated nationwide and was delivered by coach mentors employed on a part-time basis. The mentoring programme was overseen by the NGB, with training and on-going continuing professional development (CPD) provided to mentors whilst pre-arranging mentoring dyads. Mentors were assigned to local clubs within their region and provided support to their mentees over the course of a season (September to June). The mentoring programme's fundamental aim was to upskill participation level coaches within the sport by improving their knowledge and supporting their learning.

However, the mentoring programme roll-out coincided with the delivery and implementation of the NGB's newly developed approach to coaching culture and philosophy, known as the 'ID' framework (pseudonym). Crucially, the ID was developed by senior coaches and stakeholders who had accumulated significant capital within the NGB field, with a focus on creating a sustainable culture to support both coach and player development. The ID was presented as a blueprint which reflects the NGB's wider values and beliefs, directing the behaviours of both coaches and coach developers whilst forming the basis of the NGB's formal coach education pathway, including the mentoring programme. A key part of the ID was the promotion of 'game-based pedagogies' and

‘athlete-centred’ coaching strategies, in addition to a distinct ‘playing style’ for clubs at all levels to adopt and implement. Therefore, coach mentors, as part of their role, were expected to reproduce the NGB’s ID culture to their mentees and encourage engagement with it.

Methodology

Sampling and participants

Participants were purposively sampled through a homogeneous technique, meaning individuals were chosen because they belong to the same subculture and can give detail on a set phenomenon (Patton, 2015; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Participants included mentors and mentees who could discuss their thoughts and experiences of the NGB mentoring programme in question. After gaining ethical clearance, contact was made with regional associations to enable communication with mentors. In addition, to access a larger pool of potential participants social media mechanisms was used to make direct contact with mentors. To specifically recruit mentees a snowball sampling strategy was employed, where interviewed mentors directed the researcher to mentees who might provide “information rich cases” (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 71).

In total, 14 mentors were recruited who had on average 17.1 years of coaching experience (range 8 to 38 years). The mentors had been employed by the NGB in a mentoring capacity on average for 2 years (range 0.5 to 4 years) and had worked on average with 4 participation domain clubs (range 1 to 8). Mentors’ coaching qualifications ranged from UKCC Level 2 to Level 4 within the respective sport. In addition, 4 mentees were interviewed who had accumulated on average 7.8 years of coaching experience (range 1-12) and all held a minimum of a UKCC Level 1 coaching qualification. All mentees were coaching at participation domain clubs (See Tables 1 and 2).

[INSERT TABLES 1 AND 2 HERE]

Paradigmatic approach and method

Positioned broadly within the interpretivist paradigm, this research was guided by social constructionism, which attempts to explore how multiple realities are constructed by individuals, with truth considered to be a matter of shared meaning (Patton, 2015). Thus, a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology is emphasised, resulting in a qualitative methodology which enabled the researchers to uncover the meanings that mentors and mentees construct, alongside understanding the context that impacts upon their dispositions, beliefs, and practice (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Within qualitative research, interviews involve the researcher and participant/s becoming "conversational partners" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 14) in a quest to discover the what, why and how of a phenomenon. Jones, Brown, and Holloway (2013, p. 47) have proposed the primary purpose of using interviews in qualitative research is to "uncover the world of the participants, their thoughts and feelings on a phenomenon, and an account of their experiences". Consequently, the use of semi-structured interviews was considered the most appropriate, which Bourdieu describes as artful improvisations that characterise human interaction (Bourdieu, 1977; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). Participants who agreed to take part in the research were sent a participant information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, research ethics, data collection, confidentiality and participants right to withdraw. Following this, informed consent was obtained, and data collection commenced.

Interviews were conducted either face-to-face at a suitable location (n = 6), or via telephone (n = 12). To supplement the face-to-face interviews, the use of telephone interviews helped to overcome geographical constraints whilst proving useful when discussing topics participants "might be reluctant to talk about" in person (Sparkes &

Smith, 2014, p. 88). Interviews lasted on average for 46 minutes (range 29 – 67 minutes), producing 835 minutes of audio and 216 pages of single-spaced transcription. The interview questions were delivered from two pre-planned interview guides used accordingly with mentors and mentees, which were shaped by the research questions and helped to direct the interaction between researcher and participant. However, the semi-structured nature provided freedom to steer the interview in different directions to uncover participants' experiences of the NGB's formalised mentoring programme (Jones et al., 2013; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). All interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis can be considered a theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data and was used in the current study to "provide analyses of people's experiences in relation to an issue, or the factors and processes that underlie and influence particular phenomena" (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016, p. 193). Thematic analysis is compatible with social constructionism, incorporating both a top-down and bottom-up approach to analysis which allows theoretical concepts (such as Bourdieu's) to be associated to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, Bourdieu's emphasis on a dialectic rather than dualistic relationship between the dichotomies of structure/agency or objectivity/subjectivity is a key premise of social constructionist theory (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), aligning with the paradigmatic assumptions which informed the research.

The first phase of the analysis involved becoming familiar with the interview transcripts (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Following this a coding process occurred at the latent rather than semantic level, identifying underlying assumptions, theoretical concepts, and ideologies of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Rather than being considered a separate stage, coding and theme development was an on-

going process. A theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). To connect theory with the data, both the coding process alongside refining and naming themes utilised an abductive approach (Blaikie, 2010). In complimenting Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic process, abductive analysis emphasises the iterative and recursive nature of data analysis by incorporating elements of induction and deduction, where the researcher's role is to mediate a reciprocal dialogue between theory and data (Blaikie, 2010). This process enabled the employed Bourdieusian framework to enhance the level of abstraction, allowing mentoring as a potential form of cultural reproduction to be situated within a specified theoretical framework (cf. Townsend & Cushion, 2017). Nonetheless, it is important to articulate that "the use of a theoretical framework was not a rigid prejudgment as to how to read the data (correctly), but a process of supporting analysis and interpretation" (Cushion & Jones, 2014, p. 281). Through engagement with thematic analysis and the abductive process, three specified themes were developed to show the thread of reproduction: (1) mentor training and embodiment; (2) mentoring practice and reproduction; and (3) symbolic capital and legitimate knowledge.

Results and Discussion

To show the reproductive thread of the NGB's ID framework, Pierre Bourdieu's social theory has been applied as an analytical framework. The ID was a specific framework that promoted 'game-based pedagogies' and 'athlete-centred' coaching strategies, and for some mentees may have had a positive impact on their coaching practice. The analysis in this case however focussed on tracing how the ID framework was inculcated in mentors. Then, how through the mentoring process the ID became a rationalising set of ideas that were being reproduced uncritically to mentees. Consequently, three themes are presented:

(1) mentor training and embodiment; (2) mentoring practice and reproduction; and (3) symbolic capital and legitimate knowledge.

Mentor training and embodiment

Bourdieu (1977) argues that culture constitutes beliefs, values, and rituals. The NGB's ID framework can be viewed as an attempt at developing a 'coaching culture' that is produced and reproduced through coaching practices, interaction, and communication. The ID framework epitomised the NGB's beliefs regarding 'good coaching', emphasising the use of athlete-centred coaching strategies and game-based approaches and was illustrative of the fact that NGB's can "endorse particular kinds of practices and ways of being while discouraging others" (Barker-Ruchti, Barker, Rynne, & Lee, 2016, p. 2). Although arbitrary in nature, NGB's can reinforce ideas, beliefs, and dispositions that can become embedded. These can be positive or negative and constrain or enable an individual's practice. In this case, the NGB's coaching culture was presented continually to mentors during their training and recruitment process as was the need to convey the NGB's coaching culture to their mentees:

> I would say pretty much every element of anything delivered from a CPD point of view either related back or was directly about the ID so that's the big message... So, it's very much the brand almost of spreading the word of it (Graham, mentor).

> As part of becoming a mentor when doing the interview, we had to do an extensive process… we had to buy into that [the ID] and talk about how we would then filter that down to clubs so what to say and how to say it (Greg, mentor).

Pedagogic action is described by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, p. 5) as "the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" and is fundamental in reproducing the arbitrary culture of the dominant group, evidenced by the NGB through their education

and preparation of mentors. It could be contended that mentor training functioned to produce a group habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), reinforcing dispositions demanded by the NGB for the specified role as a mentor. According to Bourdieu (2000) a group habitus develops as a result of an "implicit collusion among all agents who are products of similar conditions and conditioning" resulting in "an immediate agreement of judging and acting" (p. 145). Through the training process, mentors became 'believers' and 'followers' of the arbitrary culture's beliefs.

> I'm a disciple. So, I'm a disciple of the NGB's ID. I'm a sort of fully paid up member, so therefore, my view is the NGB's view (Phillip, mentor).

Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) suggest pedagogic authority refers to "a power to exert symbolic violence" and those who possess it (NGB's) are at their strongest when they meet individuals with similar pre-existing dispositions (p. 13). This perhaps explains why mentors were generally those who had already developed a "feel for the game" through the NGB's coach education pathway (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). Mentors demonstrated that their ideas and beliefs surrounding coaching practice predominantly came from the NGB's coach education pathway. Indeed, Terry (mentor) expresses this point by suggesting "my ideas have been developed by going on lots of coach education, CPDs, which are all provided by the NGB". The role of training in developing the required dispositions has been explained by Jenkins (2002), who in drawing upon Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), argues that "explicit teaching is more important than implicit experience in the internalisation of the habitus" (p. 106). Graham builds upon this notion.

> Interviewer: Are your ideas always informed by the NGB?
>
> Graham (mentor): Yeah, I would say yeah, I've probably been indoctrinated into that way a little bit myself… there might be some disagreements out there but

> because I'm in the process, even though it's my session it would marry up well to what they [NGB] would want to deliver.

Through a process of habitus adjustment, mentors can receive and distribute the history objectified within institutions (Bourdieu, 1977). Institutional beliefs and dispositions need to become embodied by individuals before being reproduced to others, highlighted by Mark (mentor) when proclaiming "you've got to live and breathe it, without being too dramatic… you've got to be what you're talking about". This sentiment was shared by other mentors, who explained how the ID became embodied within their beliefs and practice:

> I would say it's more like an ethos that underpins. So, I've babbled on there a bit about how I've used it, but because you have an understanding of it… it almost becomes instinctive… it underpins the way I coach, and then the way I mentor (Phillip, mentor).

> I think you get to a stage where you... where you've worked with it [the ID] and it becomes ingrained in your technique anyway (Ryan, mentor).

Mentors internalised the NGB's coaching culture as "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). From lasting exposure to the NGB's messages through mentor training and other NGB informed coach education initiatives, mentors personified the ID coaching culture and possessed the associated dispositions.

> I'm asking coaches to go out and change their mindset and accept challenges to their way of doing things based on what the NGB are telling them is good practice. So, I can't, on the one hand, ask someone who I'm working with to do that and then not have the same approach myself (Mark, mentor).

As the analysis suggests, these dispositions and beliefs surrounding the NGB's ID have been "turned into a second nature" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 63) and embodied by mentors. Habitus can extend beyond the individual, existing within and between social groups after extensive exposure to shared experiences and cultural practices (Bourdieu, 1984). Due to this embodiment, it would appear mentors formed a hexis where their bodily mannerisms, behaviours, and actions have mastered the "modus operandi" of the field (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52).

Mentoring practice and reproduction

Mentors described how they utilised numerous activities with their mentees that served to legitimise and transmit the knowledge and beliefs of the arbitrary culture. These strategies aimed to fully initiate mentees into the coaching culture of the NGB through 'buying' into the ID. One method to obtain buy-in was the use of internal CPD workshops within mentee clubs.

> We are asked to do workshops, when it comes to, you know, match day observations and stuff like that. We are also asked to put on workshops for the club, for the coaches, for the parents. Just to get some of the NGB messages across (David, mentor).

> We have done some work with both clubs I have worked with; we have done a sort of CPD workshop… I certainly try and reinforce it [The ID] every time I see them and work with the coach (Nick, mentor).

Through hosting CPD workshops with mentees and other stakeholders within the club setting, individuals can begin to learn the 'right' activities and behaviours stated in the NGB's ID framework. This form of pedagogic action by mentors can be seen to promote a set of expected norms, beliefs and behaviours of the arbitrary culture – reflecting the

interests of the dominant group within the field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Jenkins, 2002). Here, the mentoring process can result in a doxic experience for mentees, centred on the reproduction and embodiment of the NGB's ideologies towards coaching practice.

> Interviewer: So, I suppose your role is to pass on the ideas around the ID?

> Greg (mentor): That is right. Yes, it is knowledge transfer, isn't it? It is like the old continuous improvement Japanese Sensei thing, you know... my job is to transfer knowledge and one goal that should be part of their culture – that type of thinking. So, I say to the coaches the things I'm not here to do rather than the things I'm here to do. So, I say, "I'm not here to provide you with a session, I'm here to help you evolve and create and develop your sessions in line with how the NGB is looking to develop players".

In addition to CPD workshops, mentors suggested they modelled 'best practice' coaching sessions to help mentees buy into the ID. Modelling sessions for mentees aligns with an apprenticeship model of mentoring, which assumes the optimum way for mentees to learn is by emulating someone with enhanced experience (Jones et al., 2009). Through their superior levels of symbolic capital, mentors were positioned hierarchically above their mentees within the field (Bourdieu, 1986). This master and apprentice format was utilised by mentors as an implicit mode of inculcation, exposing mentees to the NGB's contextual doxa through demonstrating specific ways of coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Such examples of coaching practice or 'ways' of coaching might have been an improvement on mentees' current practice, what Bourdieu (1996) described as creating a 'space of possibilities'. The point here is that an opposite effect was created (cf. Cushion et al., 2019), a space of impossibilities where the cultural structure, the ID, imposed

constraints limiting what could be attempted or accomplished as alternative perspectives were disregarded.

> What I do is I tend to go and try to deliver a session quite early on to get a little bit of credibility, if that makes sense. You know, "I can coach because I've been doing it for a long time, and here's how I'm going to coach your players". So, I just put on a bit of a session and see what they think… because credibility, I think, is really important when you're trying to pass something on or pass knowledge on to people (Terry, mentor).

> Certainly, modelling is an important factor, being able to show them. The critical factor for me is they see what you want them to buy into works… so a bit of modelling (Simon, mentor).

> I feel like I've mentored, as what the NGB call 'mentoring', but I think, probably, the majority has been putting sessions on and they'll watch the sessions and they'll get it (Elliot, mentor).

This process of modelling is akin to what Bourdieu (1998) describes as a vision of experience. Here, through social reinforcement mentees become inculcated into experiencing one view of what constitutes good coaching – in this case the ID framework. After the modelling process, mentees' coaching practice was compared against a checklist of the ID framework. Mentees are analysed in accordance to the ID, to assess their development of the requisite dispositions and capital demanded by their mentors. These norms were arbitrary in nature and reflect an underlying culture and tradition, with the ID used to ensure mentees were coaching in line with the NGB's beliefs.

> I also have an app on my phone which is the checklist for the ID… I can observe a coach and just do those on my phone, the boxes they're ticking, and I can do it either after or during it, it depends on our relationship (Mark, mentor).

> So, you've probably seen we've got coaching fundamentals and we try and take those with us upon on a match day or a training day and try and encourage coaches to tick some of those boxes (Max, mentor).

> I think sometimes you use the ID as a checklist as well and you move on through there. It's useful as a little checklist, a mental checklist or a written checklist, you know? (Ryan, mentor)

The use of the ID as a checklist can be viewed as a form of pedagogic work, described by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, p. 31) as "a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training i.e. habitus… and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalised arbitrary". Over time, encouraging mentees to coach in accordance to the ID sought to generate correct responses, producing legitimate consumers and keeping order (Jenkins, 2002). Mentees' dispositions became embodied, making distinctions between "what is right and what is wrong" with the ID misrecognised as legitimate through a process of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 8). As a result, the beliefs of the arbitrary culture formed the basis of mentees' future coaching practice, becoming internalised and influencing the behaviours of additional coaches within their clubs.

> I've bought into it. I'm spreading it to other coaches now, I'm starting to influence coaches going on courses, going to CPD's, getting them to start to think more about how and why they do things and you know so I'm mentoring almost. I believe it's the right way forward. I use the coaching points from the ID. I would

> take some coaching points from it, not all of them because coaches tend to take too many. But I would take a few and if I done them I would tick that box. I read that [the ID] and then tried to instill it in my practices (Scott, mentee).

Mentees internalising the ID can be viewed as a form of implicit inculcation, where the mentor-mentee dyad assists with the "assimilation of styles or knacks" to transform mentees' dispositions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 47). Pedagogical practices such as delivering in-house CPD workshops, modelling sessions, and observing mentee coaches in practice were frequently utilised by mentors to facilitate and embed the NGB's legitimised messages. Moreover, there was an expectation that mentors would signpost their mentees towards NGB accredited coaching qualifications and CPD events, where the ID would be reproduced further.

> He spent a lot of time in the club formally in different ways, encouraging people to go on the courses and on the CPD events (Scott, mentee).

> We go to meetings where they've talked about "have you inspired anybody to go on a course?" I sometimes say, "well no", and they've said "well, what's the point of doing it [mentoring]?" (Greg, mentor).

> We're encouraged as mentors to make sure that coaches are being signposted to NGB qualifications… there would be an expectation that, at least, two or three of those coaches went on and did another coaching qualification or accessed the CPD event (Ewan, mentor).

Educational institutions are designed to favour those who already possess some form of cultural capital within the field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). By being exposed to the mentoring programme mentees possess some degree of cultural capital (as embodied

dispositions) before enrolling on further NGB courses, making pedagogic transmission an easy process (Bourdieu, 1977). Some mentors viewed the mentoring process as one designed simply to embed the NGB's coach education messages into coaches.

> So, it's a way of almost reinforcing on an on-going basis what they teach them on courses otherwise it is very easy for them [coaches] to revert back to what they have always done and slip into bad habits. So, it's a way of possibly reinforcing good practice (Nick, mentor).

The mentoring programme allowed mentees to embody the cultural capital of their mentors, with Bourdieu (1971) identifying educational systems as a productive locus for developing a habitus. This embodied cultural capital became institutionalised through obtaining educational qualifications, successfully resulting in cultural reproduction.

Symbolic capital and legitimate knowledge

Within fields, individuals and groups are in a constant struggle to manoeuvre and enhance their positioning, with Bourdieu (1977, p. 169) contending "the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa", whilst seeking to reproduce the orthodoxy of the field. 'Doxa' – the conditions of existence or the order of things – became perceived as acceptable, natural, and self-evident (Bourdieu, 2005; Cushion et al., 2019). Dylan (mentee) explains how his mentor ensured all coaches within his club utilised the contextual doxa: "what he [mentor] did was with the coaches, he tried to bring the NGB ID in and get all the lads coaching a certain way and stuff like that". In this instance, Bourdieu's concept of capital can explain how social groups possess a symbolic power which works to maintain and reproduce the field's doxa, legitimising sources of knowledge. Consequently, the NGB's messages became misrecognised as legitimate by mentees and the capital mentors possessed was not perceived objectively, but in fact

skewed by the acting power differentials. Notably, the NGB badge and branded clothing acted as objectified cultural capital, perceived as symbolic within the sports coaching field as an attribute of authority (Bourdieu, 1991).

> The mentor has a lot of authority with that badge and you can use that, it's powerful. And I'm now realising, I need to maximise and not go around being humble (Phillip, mentor).

> I really underestimated the power of that. I must admit there is a sense… my ego on some levels likes the NGB badge and you take on sometimes from this, a type of aura. You drive into a club and you're walking down the path, everyone turns around and looks (Geoff, mentor).

> It gives a legitimacy to what you're talking about, you know? So, it's not my opinion, this is what we're trying to do as a national organisation. It gives a weight to what you're saying, gives you a bit of kudos when you're coaching, it does all those things (Mark, mentor).

Mentors also possessed greater institutionalised cultural capital in the form of higher level UKCC coaching qualifications, with Bourdieu signifying "social inequalities are legitimated by the educational credentials held by those in dominant positions" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 145). By wearing branded NGB clothing (objectified), possessing higher level coaching qualifications (institutionalised), and through embodying the NGB's ID (embodied), mentors' cultural capital was recognised as symbolic capital in the coaching field (Bourdieu, 1986). Consequently, the NGB were accredited with prestige leading to the ID framework becoming misrecognised by mentees through a process of symbolic violence.

> Because it has got the NGB behind it, it makes you feel that that is the way to go. Yes, with that sort of body, it does give you a good thing, a belief in it – if that makes sense (Kieron, mentee).

> Yeah, I guess so. I guess it gives them an aura of… yeah. I think you tend to listen to someone who's within the NGB (Ronnie, mentee).

> I think it's similar to the mentoring of teachers, when mentoring teachers who need to improve and coaches with the NGB. There is a very clear hierarchical structure within the teaching profession… and there is a hierarchical structure as much as "I'm the bloke from the NGB so I know it" (Simon, mentor).

The NGB in this instance acts as a 'rite of institution' (Bourdieu, 1991) which refers to the power an institution possesses by acting upon its perceived legitimacy. As Bourdieu (1991) would suggest, this legitimacy results in mentors becoming consecrated, bestowed with power through titles i.e. a NGB employed mentor. The associated symbolic capital of this title created an apparent social distance between mentors as expert coaching practitioners and mentees as amateurs. However, mentees have already developed their own dispositions towards what constitutes effective coaching prior to their involvement with the mentoring programme. Therefore, in some instances, mentees' pre-existing dispositions resisted the new cultural beliefs endorsed by the NGB's ID framework.

> There are quite a lot that don't – probably over half, that don't want to have anything to do with it to be fair… they don't like it for whatever reason. Whether they feel they are going to be told what to do or they are not doing it right. Whether it is the fear of that, I am not sure (Kieron, mentee).

> I think a lot of people have said the right things and nodded… but I think once they've gone back after he [mentor] disappeared week one, week two, week three later… I think personally they've gone back to old school (Scott, mentee).

> Interviewer: Were you sceptical before working with your mentor?

> Dylan (mentee): Yeah. To be fair you think "oh dear" you know what I mean? – "what can he tell me, what can he teach me" … I did use a lot of line drills because that's how I was coached. I'm 49, I've been playing the game since I was like 7 or 8, and that's how I was coached.

Despite having the potential to positively impact coaching practice, mentors experienced resistance to the initiatives they aimed to promote. The coaches' past experiences and habitus instituted a "relative irreversibility" of coaching ideas as the mentors presented new experiences or challenges that were "at every moment perceived through the categories already constricted by prior experiences" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133; Cushion & Jones, 2014). Although an individual's habitus can be transformed, early experiences and primary habitus tends to resist change by "rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 60/61). This can be seen further where the ID framework was criticised by some mentees.

> That ID blue print, it was just too broad and too um yeah, all things to all men and I haven't gone back to it if I'm honest… not sure what it's focusing on. I mentioned it to them [other coaches] about this ID, and they would just shrug their shoulders. Yeah, uh I didn't really think that much of it and that's probably why I'm not going back to it (Ronnie, mentee).

It could be contended that mentees such as Ronnie experienced hysteresis, where a misalignment between field conditions and embodied capital within the habitus causes disjuncture (Bourdieu, 1977). Here, a culture shock has occurred between mentees' existing habitus and the new field structures, with some individuals responding to this new legitimacy by articulating how the NGB's ID messages are not "for the likes of us" (Jenkins, 2002, p. 113).

Concluding thoughts and recommendations

Mentoring is often assumed as a benign and unproblematic process, yet the practice operates within distinct sporting cultures with power relations at its core (Cushion, 2015). Through a Bourdieusian lens, this paper has answered calls for greater empirical research into sports coach mentoring, providing evidence of cultural reproduction within formalised provision (cf. Bloom, 2013; Jones et al., 2009). It is important to reiterate this research has not attempted to evaluate the mentoring programme, mentors' practice, or the ID framework which has the potential to enhance coaching practice. Instead, the reproductive process which may occur within formalised coach mentoring provision has merely been highlighted and explored in greater depth. In particular, it would appear effective symbolic violence reduces critical thinking for mentees – essentially going against the facilitative and transformative learning mentoring attempts to facilitate. Indeed, the uncritical reproduction of doxic coaching cultures outwardly poses challenges towards mentee learning, development and dispositions towards best practice. It could be argued the NGB's ID and associated mentoring programme worked to transform "the habitus of those on both sides of the mentoring dyad" with the intention to "produce/reproduce habitus in a particular form… that is determined by the needs of employers and other dominant groupings, rather than by mentors or mentees themselves" (Colley, 2003, p. 17).

Despite this, additional research into formalised coach mentoring programmes is required, as there is currently a paucity of evidence available examining cultural reproduction within this area. Indeed, researchers might look to investigate further the role of mentors' and mentees' habituses in either embodying or resisting entrenched coaching cultures. Bourdieu (1993, p. 150) argues that "every exercise of power is accompanied by a discourse aimed at legitimising the power of the group that exercises it". In this research, we can view the NGB's ID framework as a discourse to maintain the doxa and interests of the dominant players within the coaching field. Exploiting a coaching culture in the form of the ID framework allowed the NGB to act as a 'rite of institution', enabling mentors to legitimise their position and gain influence over their mentees due to their enhanced symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991). By misrecognising the power relations at play, mentees are placed to receive assistance from the NGB who act as an unquestioned authority, establishing a logic of practice for mentees to adhere to (Bourdieu, 1990). Therefore, the arbitrary culture is produced and reproduced by mentees whilst the political nature of the act remains hidden (Cushion & Jones, 2014).

Within the coaching field, mentors are significant social agents who shape what counts as legitimate knowledge (Cushion, 2015). Therefore, recommendations are made for sporting organisations to employ a critical lens over their own coaching cultures and beliefs to decipher what their institutions identify legitimate knowledge and practice to be. If done successfully, formalised mentoring provision may indeed help to "rework coaches' [mentors', mentees'] habitus, discourse and knowledge, thus facilitating an expansion of alternative ways of thinking and doing" (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2016, p. 183).

Notes

1. The UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) is a framework that supports the development, endorsement, and improvement of NGB delivered coach education.

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