

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

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Abstract

Despite its positive discourse, formalised coach mentoring can be problematic due to the institutional agendas of the National Governing Bodies (NGB) who coordinate such provision. This research attempted to explore this issue in greater depth by providing a more critical analysis of formalised coach mentoring. 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. During their training, 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. It is suggested 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.

1 **Introduction**

2 More sophisticated approaches to understanding sport coaching have resulted in an
3 increased need to understand how coaches learn beyond the simplistic identification of
4 ‘learning situations’ (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). When considering the development of
5 coaches, formalised National Governing Body (NGB) coach education courses have
6 traditionally been positioned as the primary medium through which coaches are trained
7 and certified to work within the field (Lyle & Cushion, 2017; Piggott, 2012). However,
8 this provision has frequently been subject to a number of criticisms (e.g. Cushion et al.,
9 2010). In particular, course design has been identified as ‘closed-circle’ (Piggott, 2012)
10 meaning knowledge and practice is accepted uncritically, which often results in coaches
11 having to comply with an enforced reproduction of NGB professional dogma. This dogma
12 may take the form of a promoted coaching philosophy, a prescribed method of delivery,
13 a preference for a particular coaching approach, or aspects of a NGB’s sporting culture
14 (Cushion & Nelson, 2013; Piggott, 2012). From this perspective, formal coach education
15 can be as a powerful socialising agent for coaches as they move through the coaching
16 field (Lyle & Cushion, 2017).

17 In addressing these criticisms and to move away from overly prescriptive
18 approaches to coach education, there have been recommendations for NGB’s to include
19 increased in situ learning opportunities within their educational provision (Nelson,
20 Cushion, & Potrac, 2013). One pedagogical tool which has gathered attention within the
21 literature is mentoring. For twenty years scholars have called for the implementation of
22 mentoring programmes to support contextualised coach development (e.g. Bloom,
23 Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Nelson et al.,
24 2013). Although nuanced and contextually bound (Jones, Miles, & Harris, 2009),
25 mentoring within sports coaching typically involves a supportive and facilitative

1 relationship between two coaches or within a wider support network (e.g. Sawiuk, Taylor,
2 & Groom, 2017). These mentoring relationships are either formal or informal in nature,
3 with formalised mentoring generally occurring in a structured environment authorised
4 through institutions to increase the consistency and effectiveness of the process (Wright
5 & Smith, 2000). In contrast, informal mentoring occurs when relationships are formed
6 naturally in an unstructured manner, beyond direct organisational control (Chao, Walz,
7 & Gardner, 2006).

8 McQuade, Davis, and Nash (2015) have identified how the UK Coaching
9 Certificate¹ (UKCC) has recently sanctioned the deployment of formalised mentoring
10 programmes across a range of sports, with many NGB's obliging due to mentoring's
11 positive discourse. However, mentoring is not without its issues, for example Sawiuk,
12 Taylor, and Groom (2018) acknowledged that formalised coach mentoring programmes
13 are often plagued by institutional agendas, such as a focus on increasing target
14 demographics to obtain funding. This means that formalised mentoring may submit to
15 what Power (1999) terms an 'audit society', where mentee learning is compromised for
16 socialising individuals in an attempt to collect empirical data which satisfies institutional
17 objectives (Sawiuk et al., 2018). Despite its positive discourse, we can sense how
18 formalised coach mentoring programmes might be problematic, with the external
19 interests of dominant groups influencing the process (Jones et al., 2009).

20 Indeed, mentoring is a social construction, involving power relations and interests
21 of varying stakeholders, with mentoring practices determined by social structures and
22 trends (Cushion, 2015). For example, the role of power relations within mentoring has
23 been previously highlighted by Cushion and colleagues (2003), where it was argued
24 neophyte coaches serve an 'apprenticeship of observation' when in the presence of more
25 experienced and therefore powerful coaches meaning that novice coaches are often

1 'initiated into the traditions, habits, rules, cultures and practices' of that coaching
2 environment (Merriam, 1983, p. 37). In building upon this notion, recent Foucauldian
3 inspired research has begun to shed light on how both disciplinary and pastoral concepts
4 of power operate within formalised coach mentoring programmes, directing mentee
5 coaching practices to align with their mentors' normalised beliefs (e.g. Leeder, 2019;
6 Zehntner & McMahon, 2019). As a result, through observations and interactions with
7 their mentor alongside issues of power, a mentee may imitate legitimised behaviours,
8 leading to an uncritical reproduction of coaching practices and beliefs. While mentoring
9 is often presented as a panacea to current professional development dilemmas (Griffiths,
10 2011) the workings of power within it means that its outcomes may run contrary to those
11 intended - a process of socialisation that reinforces rather than challenges existing
12 coaching practice.

13 The aim of the present research therefore was to explore this socialising and
14 reproductive element with greater sophistication. To this end, the conceptual framework
15 of Pierre Bourdieu was applied as his concepts provide a 'set of thinking tools visible
16 through the results they yield' (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 15), and can help to explain the
17 complex relationships which occur within mentoring and coaching environments. As
18 Cushion (2011) argues, Bourdieusian ideas can help illuminate mentoring as a
19 contextualised, contested and embodied process where socialisation may act to reproduce
20 the underlying structures that operate within fields of practice. Therefore, his work offers
21 an explanatory device for the reproduction of coaching cultures i.e. belief systems,
22 practices, and ways of being within coaching contexts specifically within formalised
23 coach mentoring provision.

24 While Bourdieu has been utilised to show how a legitimate culture is reproduced
25 by coaches and coach educators through their dispositions and practice (e.g. Cushion,

1 Griffiths, & Armour, 2017; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014) research considering
2 mentoring as a specific social productive and reproductive practice is currently limited.
3 Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore how a formalised coach mentoring
4 programme may contribute to the reproduction of a ‘coaching culture’. In answering calls
5 for more qualitative and empirical research on formalised sports coach mentoring
6 programmes (cf. Bloom, 2013; Jones et al., 2009), the value of this work lays in
7 attempting to uncover the ‘taken-for-granted’ and ‘natural’ of mentoring within
8 formalised mentoring provision. In addition, this paper endeavours to add a critical
9 sociological analysis to the coach mentoring literature, with the hope of enhancing our
10 current understanding of this professional development tool for coach learning.

11 **Methodology**

12 *Context*

13 A UK based NGB developed a formalised coach mentoring programme to support ‘grass
14 roots’ or ‘participation domain’ (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) coaches which operated
15 nationwide and was supported by coach mentors operating on a part-time basis. The
16 mentoring programme was overseen by the NGB, with training and on-going continuing
17 professional development (CPD) provided to mentors whilst pre-arranging mentoring
18 dyads. Mentors were assigned to local clubs within their region and provided support to
19 their mentees over the course of a season (September to June). The mentoring
20 programme’s fundamental aim was to upskill participation level coaches within the sport
21 by improving their knowledge and supporting their learning. However, the mentoring
22 programme roll-out coincided with the delivery and implementation of the NGB’s newly
23 developed approach to coaching culture and philosophy, known as the ‘ID’. The ID was
24 presented as reflecting the NGB’s wider values and beliefs, and formed a blue print for
25 directing the behaviours of coaches and coach educators whilst forming the basis of the

1 NGB's formal coach education pathway, including the mentoring programme. A key part
2 of the ID was the promotion of 'game-based pedagogies' and 'athlete-centred' coaching
3 strategies. The coach mentors, as part of their role, were expected to promote the NGB's
4 ID to their mentees and encourage engagement with it.

5 *Sampling and participants*

6 Participants were purposively sampled through a homogeneous technique, meaning
7 individuals were chosen because they belong to the same subculture and can give detail
8 on a set phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Participants included coach
9 mentors and mentees who could discuss their thoughts and experiences of the NGB
10 mentoring programme in question. After gaining ethical clearance, contact was made with
11 regional associations to enable contact with coach mentors. In addition, to access a larger
12 pool of potential participants social media mechanisms was used to make direct contact
13 with coach mentors. To specifically recruit mentees a snowball sampling strategy was
14 employed, where interviewed mentors directed the researcher to mentees who might
15 provide 'information rich cases' (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 71).

16 Those agreeing to take part in the research were sent a participant information
17 sheet explaining the purpose of the study, research ethics, data collection, confidentiality
18 and participants right to withdraw. Following this, informed consent was obtained. In
19 total, 14 mentors were recruited who had on average 17.1 years of coaching experience
20 (range 8 to 38 years). The mentors had been employed by the NGB in a mentoring
21 capacity on average for 2 years (range 0.5 to 4 years) and had worked on average with 4
22 participation domain clubs (range 1 to 8). Mentors' coaching qualifications ranged from
23 UKCC Level 2 to Level 4 within the respective sport. In addition, 4 mentees were
24 interviewed who had accumulated on average 7.8 years of coaching experience (range 1-

1 12) and all held a minimum of a UKCC Level 1 coaching qualification. All mentees were
2 coaching at participation domain clubs (See Tables 1 and 2).

3 [INSERT TABLES 1 AND 2 HERE]

4 *Method*

5 Within qualitative research interviews involve the researcher and participant/s becoming
6 ‘conversational partners’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 14) in a quest to discover the what,
7 why and how of a phenomenon. Jones, Brown, and Holloway (2013, p. 47) have proposed
8 the primary purpose of using interviews in qualitative research is to ‘uncover the world
9 of the participants, their thoughts and feelings on a phenomenon, and an account of their
10 experiences’. Consequently, the use of semi-structured interviews were considered the
11 most appropriate, described by Bourdieu as artful improvisations that characterise human
12 interaction (Bourdieu, 1977; Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Interviews were conducted
13 either face-to-face at a suitable location (n = 6), or via telephone (n = 12). To supplement
14 the face-to-face interviews, the use of telephone interviews helped to overcome
15 geographical constraints whilst proving useful when discussing topics participants “might
16 be reluctant to talk about” in person (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 88).

17 Interviews lasted on average for 46 minutes (range 29 – 67 minutes), producing
18 835 minutes of audio and 216 pages of single-spaced transcription. The interview
19 questions were delivered from two pre-planned interview guides used accordingly with
20 mentors and mentees, helping to direct the interaction between researcher and participant.
21 However, the semi-structured nature provided freedom to steer the interview in different
22 directions to uncover participants’ experiences of the NGB’s formalised mentoring
23 programme (Jones et al., 2013; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). All interviews were transcribed
24 verbatim.

1 *Data Analysis*

2 Thematic analysis can be considered a theoretically-flexible approach to analysing
3 qualitative data and was used in the current study to “provide analyses of people’s
4 experiences in relation to an issue, or the factors and processes that underlie and influence
5 particular phenomena” (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016, p. 193). The first phase of the
6 analysis involved becoming familiar with the interview transcripts (Sparkes & Smith,
7 2014). Following this a coding process occurred at the latent rather than semantic level,
8 identifying underlying assumptions, theoretical concepts, and ideologies of the data
9 (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Codes were then collated into
10 representative themes which emphasised important aspects of the data, before being
11 reviewed, refined, and named (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

12 To connect theory with the data, an abductive approach was utilised when coding
13 and naming themes (Denzin, 1978). In complimenting Braun and Clarke’s (2006)
14 thematic process, abductive analysis emphasises the iterative and recursive nature of data
15 analysis by incorporating elements of induction and deduction, where the researcher’s
16 role is to mediate a reciprocal dialogue between theory and data (Blaikie, 2010). This
17 process enabled the employed Bourdieusian framework to enhance the level of
18 abstraction, allowing mentoring as a potential form of cultural reproduction to be situated
19 within a specified theoretical framework (cf. Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Nonetheless,
20 it is important to articulate that ‘the use of a theoretical framework was not a rigid
21 prejudgment as to how to read the data (correctly), but a process of supporting analysis
22 and interpretation’ (Cushion & Jones, 2014, p. 281). Through engagement with thematic
23 analysis and the abductive process, three specified themes were developed to show the
24 thread of reproduction: (1) mentor training and embodiment; (2) mentoring practice and
25 reproduction; and (3) symbolic capital and legitimate knowledge.

1 **Theoretical framework**

2 To understand social practices such as mentoring, Bourdieu's key concepts can help
3 articulate the dialogue and interactions between the deep-rooted antinomies of objective
4 vs subjective and structure vs agency (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, Bourdieu's
5 social praxeology functions to incorporate both a structuralist and constructivist approach
6 (Bourdieu, 1989). To capture the objective and structuralist element the concept of field
7 is used, defined as 'a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in
8 certain forms of power (or capital)' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 16). For Bourdieu,
9 the social world is divided into relational fields devoted to certain activities which
10 respond to rules of functioning and institutions that define the relations among agents
11 within them. Fields therefore incorporate objective structures, positions, rituals, interests
12 and ways of being which are represented in the practices of the individuals and groups
13 within that social arena (Bourdieu, 1984).

14 In this light, sport coaching can be viewed as a field, a site of cultural reproduction
15 and socialisation where power dynamics exist as individuals strive to achieve certain
16 objectives (Cushion, 2011; Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Bourdieu utilises the term doxa
17 to explain how fields can develop 'a set of shared opinions and unquestioned beliefs that
18 bind participants together' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 70). The doxa within a field can be
19 internalised by individuals, working to reshape their thoughts and actions. Those in more
20 dominant positions within fields look to defend the doxa, pushing back its limits and
21 exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977). Fields position
22 individuals and social groups in accordance to the amount of capital they possess, which
23 can either contribute or transform the structure of the field (Bourdieu, 1998). The field of
24 coaching can be considered a 'field of struggles', where social agents strive to increase
25 their accumulation of capital and coaching authority (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.

1 101). Within the coaching field, various stakeholders including athletes, coaches, and
2 NGB's compete to maintain or improve their social position based upon their accrued
3 capital (Cushion & Jones, 2014). Capital is a form of power operationalised primarily as
4 economic, cultural, and social (Bourdieu, 1986). Whilst economic capital represents
5 monetary investment, cultural capital is more complex and can be embodied through
6 dispositions and values during socialisation, objectified in material possessions, and
7 institutionalised within educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). Alternatively, social
8 capital is obtained from one's position in society i.e. who they know and their
9 membership to different social groups (Bourdieu, 1986). Within fields, forms of capital
10 can become symbolic when they are recognised as worthy by those within that social
11 space. Symbolic capital therefore relates to 'the form that one or another of these species
12 (economic, cultural, social) takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that
13 recognise its specific logic' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). In coaching, symbolic
14 capital is accredited to individuals who have acquired extensive practitioner experience
15 (athlete or coach) in addition to high level coaching qualifications (e.g. Blackett, Evans,
16 & Piggott, 2017; Cushion et al., 2017; Townsend & Cushion, 2015).

17 If field constitutes the objective and structuralist aspect of Bourdieu's praxeology,
18 habitus incorporates the constructivist element, resulting in an ontologically complicit
19 relationship (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus can be considered as 'systems of
20 durable, transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53), which are developed through
21 lasting exposure to specific social conditions. Constituted in practice, habitus is a product
22 of objective regularities where social structures come to be embodied as schemes of
23 perception through socialisation (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus can be distinguished into
24 either primary or secondary, with primary habitus developed during an individual's early
25 life experiences, whilst secondary habitus is developed later through education, training

1 and employment contexts (Costa & Murphy, 2015). Habitus works to generate a
2 ‘correctness of practice’, based upon past experiences and produced through inculcated
3 dispositions of social structures (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54). Primarily the habitus helps
4 illuminate how cultures are embodied, explaining how beliefs and dispositions can shape
5 social practices. For example, within the sports coaching literature previous research has
6 demonstrated how experience within coaching cultures can become embodied,
7 influencing coaches’ behaviours and practice (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2014; Light &
8 Evans, 2013).

9 Bourdieu suggests an inclination towards practice, such as a coaching approach
10 or philosophy, is not an innate disposition. Instead, Bourdieu argues it is a cultural product
11 that is learnt through a process of inculcation within educational systems (Jenkins, 2002).
12 Bourdieu maintains these systems are the principle method through which cultural
13 reproduction can occur, resulting in a process known as symbolic violence. Within social
14 spaces, institutions are directly implicated in propagating an explicit set of beliefs which
15 become legitimised and understood as arbitrary (Grenfell, 2007). For a culture to be
16 considered as arbitrary, it must appear as natural and necessary within its imposition and
17 content (Jenkins, 2002). Therefore, within fields those in dominant positions can
18 legitimise their beliefs and culture by presenting their views as making sense, creating
19 the necessary social conditions which allow institutions to fulfil their function.

20 Bourdieu adopts the term symbolic violence to explain how cultures are imposed
21 upon individuals or social groups in a manner experienced by the consumer as legitimate
22 (Jenkins, 2002). Symbolic violence produces misrecognition, defined as ‘the process
23 whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are, but in the form
24 that renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p.
25 xiii). In the coaching field, research has shed light on how coaches (Cushion & Jones,

1 2014) alongside sporting directors (Blackett et al., 2017) attempt to legitimise their own
2 practices and discourse in order to promote a ‘right way’ and maintain their status within
3 fields. Due to their pedagogical authority, organisations can act to reproduce the unequal
4 distribution of cultural capital via the function of pedagogic action, occurring through
5 diffuse and institutionalised education. Over time, social structures become reproduced
6 through pedagogic work, referring to the procedure of a habitus becoming inculcated by
7 an individual or group (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Through educational systems,
8 dispositions are produced to generate ‘correct responses’. Consequently, when symbolic
9 violence becomes misrecognised by its consumers, cultural reproduction is said to occur
10 (Jenkins, 2002). In short, this paper employs Bourdieu’s social praxeology to help explore
11 the ‘specific contribution that various forms of symbolic violence make to the
12 reproduction and transformation of structures of domination’ within a formalised sports
13 coach mentoring programme (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 15).

14 **Results and Discussion**

15 To show the reproductive thread of the NGB’s ID coaching culture, Pierre Bourdieu’s
16 social theory has been applied as an analytical framework. The analysis attempts to trace
17 how the ID was inculcated by mentors before being conveyed to mentees. Consequently,
18 three themes are presented: (1) mentor training and embodiment; (2) mentoring practice
19 and reproduction; and (3) symbolic capital and legitimate knowledge.

20 *Mentor training and embodiment*

21 Bourdieu (1977) argues that culture constitutes beliefs, values, and rituals. The NGB’s
22 ID can be viewed as a ‘coaching culture’ which is produced and reproduced through
23 coaching practices, interaction, and communication. The ID coaching culture epitomised
24 the NGB’s beliefs regarding ‘good coaching’, emphasising the use of athlete-centred
25 coaching strategies and game-based approaches and was illustrative of the fact that

1 NGB's can 'endorse particular kinds of practices and ways of being while discouraging
2 others' (Barker-Ruchti, Barker, Rynne, & Lee, 2016, p. 2). Although arbitrary in nature,
3 NGB's can reinforce ideas, beliefs, and dispositions which can become embedded within
4 an individual's practice. In this case, the NGB's coaching culture was continually
5 espoused to mentors during their training and recruitment process as was the need to
6 convey the NGB's coaching culture to their mentees:

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

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

13 Pedagogic action is described by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, p. 5) as "the imposition
14 of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" and is fundamental in reproducing the
15 arbitrary culture of the dominant group, evidenced by the NGB through their education
16 and preparation of mentors. It could be contended that mentor training functioned to
17 produce a group habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), reinforcing dispositions and values demanded
18 by the NGB for the specified role as a coach mentor. According to Bourdieu (2000) a
19 group habitus develops as a result of an "implicit collusion among all agents who are
20 products of similar conditions and conditioning" resulting in "an immediate agreement of
21 judging and acting" (p. 145). Through the training process, mentors became 'believers'
22 and 'followers' of the arbitrary culture's beliefs.

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

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

13 Interviewer: Are your ideas always informed by the NGB?

14 Graham (mentor): Yeah, I would say yeah, I’ve probably been indoctrinated into
15 that way a little bit myself... there might be some disagreements out there but
16 because I’m in the process, even though it’s my session it would marry up well to
17 what they [NGB] would want to deliver.

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 *Mentoring practice and reproduction*

22 Mentors described how they utilised numerous activities with their mentees that served
23 to legitimise and transmit the knowledge and beliefs of the ID culture – an arbitrary

1 culture. These strategies aimed to fully initiate mentees into the coaching culture of the
2 NGB through ‘buying’ into the ID philosophy. One method to obtain buy-in was the use
3 of internal CPD workshops within mentee clubs.

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

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

11 Through hosting CPD workshops with mentees and other key stakeholders within the
12 club setting, individuals can begin to learn the ‘right’ activities and behaviours stated in
13 the NGB’s ID framework. This form of pedagogic action by mentors can be seen to
14 promote a set of expected norms, beliefs and behaviours of the arbitrary culture –
15 reflecting the interests of the dominant group within the field (Bourdieu & Passeron,
16 1977; Jenkins, 2002). Here, the mentoring process can result in a doxic experience for
17 mentees.

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

19 Greg (mentor): That is right. Yes, it is knowledge transfer, isn’t it? It is like the
20 old continuous improvement Japanese Sensei thing, you know... my job is to
21 transfer knowledge and one goal that should be part of their culture – that type
22 of thinking. So, I say to the coaches the things I’m not here to do rather than the
23 things I’m here to do. So, I say, “I’m not here to provide you with a session,

1 I'm here to help you evolve and create and develop your sessions in line with
2 how the NGB is looking to develop players”.

3 In addition to the use of CPD workshops, mentors suggested they modelled ‘best practice’
4 coaching sessions to help mentees buy into the NGB’s promoted ID. Modelling sessions
5 for mentees aligns with an apprenticeship model of mentoring, which assumes the
6 optimum way for mentees to learn is by observing and emulating someone with enhanced
7 experience (Jones et al., 2009). Through their superior levels of symbolic capital, mentors
8 were positioned hierarchically above their mentees within the field (Bourdieu, 1986).
9 This master and apprentice format was utilised by mentors as an implicit mode of
10 inculcation, exposing mentees to the NGB’s contextual doxa through demonstrating
11 correct ways of coaching, whilst not considering alternative methods (Cushion & Jones,
12 2006).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 The use of the ID as a checklist can be viewed as a form of pedagogic work, described
20 by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, p. 31) as ‘a process of inculcation which must last long
21 enough to produce a durable training i.e. habitus... and thereby of perpetuating in
22 practices the principles of the internalised arbitrary’. Over time, encouraging mentees to
23 coach in accordance to the ID seeks to generate correct responses, producing legitimate
24 consumers and keeping order (Jenkins, 2002). Mentees’ dispositions and schemes of

1 perception become embodied, making distinctions between ‘what is right and what is
2 wrong’, with the ID philosophy misrecognised as legitimate through a process of
3 symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 8). As a result, the beliefs of the arbitrary culture
4 formed the basis of some mentees’ future coaching practice, becoming internalised and
5 influencing the behaviours of additional coaches within their clubs.

6 I’ve bought into it. I’m spreading it to other coaches now, I’m starting to influence
7 coaches going on courses, going to CPD’s, getting them to start to think more
8 about how and why they do things and you know so I’m mentoring almost. I
9 believe it’s the right way forward. I use the coaching points from the ID. I would
10 take some coaching points from it, not all of them because coaches tend to take
11 too many. But I would take a few and if I done them I would tick that box. I read
12 that [the ID] and then tried to instill it in my practices (Scott, mentee).

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

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

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

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

8 Educational institutions are designed to favour those who already possess some form of
9 cultural capital within the field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). By being exposed to the
10 mentoring programme mentees possess some degree of cultural capital (as embodied
11 dispositions) before enrolling on further NGB courses, making pedagogic transmission
12 an easy process (Bourdieu, 1977). Some mentors viewed the mentoring process as one
13 designed simply to embed the NGB's coach education messages into coaches.

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

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

22 *Symbolic capital and legitimate knowledge*

1 Within fields, individuals and groups are in a constant struggle to manoeuvre and enhance
2 their positioning, with Bourdieu (1977, p. 169) contending ‘the dominant classes have an
3 interest in defending the integrity of doxa’ whilst seeking to reproduce the orthodoxy of
4 the field. Dylan (mentee) explains how his mentor ensured all coaches within his club
5 utilised the contextual doxa: ‘what he [mentor] did was with the coaches, he tried to bring
6 the NGB ID in and get all the lads coaching a certain way and stuff like that’. In this
7 instance, Bourdieu’s concept of capital can explain how social groups possess a form of
8 symbolic power which works to maintain and reproduce the field’s doxa, legitimising
9 sources of knowledge. Mentors used their enhanced volume of symbolic capital to
10 safeguard their position and ensure the NGB’s messages became misrecognised by
11 mentees. Notably, the NGB badge and branded clothing acted as objectified cultural
12 capital, perceived as symbolic within the sports coaching field as an attribute of authority
13 (Bourdieu, 1991).

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

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

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

1 Mentors also possessed greater institutionalised cultural capital in the form of higher level
2 UKCC coaching qualifications, with Bourdieu signifying ‘social inequalities are
3 legitimated by the educational credentials held by those in dominant positions’ (Sullivan,
4 2002, p. 145). By wearing branded NGB clothing (objectified), possessing higher level
5 coaching qualifications (institutionalised), and through embodying the NGB’s coaching
6 ID (embodied), mentors’ cultural capital was deemed symbolic in the coaching field
7 (Bourdieu, 1986). Consequently, the NGB were accredited with prestige leading to the
8 ID coaching culture becoming misrecognised by mentees through a process of symbolic
9 violence.

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

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

15 I think it’s similar to the mentoring of teachers, when mentoring teachers who
16 need to improve and coaches with the NGB. There is a very clear hierarchical
17 structure within the teaching profession... and there is a hierarchical structure as
18 much as “I’m the bloke from the NGB so I know it” (Simon, mentor).

19 The NGB in this instance acts as a ‘rite of institution’ which refers to the power an
20 institution possesses by ‘acting on its representation’ (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 119). As
21 Bourdieu (1991) would suggest, this power results in mentors becoming consecrated,
22 granted a symbolic efficacy by being given titles of respect. It is this social distance
23 between the NGB mentors under the discourse of expert coaching practitioners and the
24 mentees as amateurs which afforded the arbitrary culture power and valorised the

1 symbolic relationship. The NGB as a social formation utilised pedagogic action to impose
2 their cultural arbitrary through the process of pedagogic work. However, mentees have
3 already developed their own dispositions towards what constitutes good and bad coaching
4 prior to their involvement with the mentoring programme. Therefore, in some instances
5 mentees' habitus formation and pre-existing dispositions resisted the challenge of change
6 imposed by the NGB's ID.

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

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

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

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

19 Mentors in this instance experienced resistance to the initiatives they aimed to promote,
20 as these fundamental ideas may go against mentees' pre-existing habitus (Cushion et al.,
21 2003). Although an individual's habitus is malleable and can be transformed, early
22 experiences and primary habitus tends to resist change by 'rejecting information capable

1 of calling into question its accumulated information' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 60/61). This can
2 be seen further where the ID concept was criticised by some mentees.

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

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

14 **Conclusion**

15 Mentoring is often assumed as a benign and unproblematic process, yet the practice
16 operates within distinct sporting cultures with power relations at its core (Cushion, 2015).
17 Through a Bourdieusian lens, this paper has answered calls for greater empirical research
18 into sports coach mentoring, providing evidence of cultural reproduction within
19 formalised provision (cf. Bloom, 2013; Jones et al., 2009). It is important to reiterate this
20 research has not attempted to evaluate the mentoring programme, mentors' practice, or
21 the ID concept per se. Instead, the reproductive process which may occur within
22 formalised coach mentoring provision has merely been highlighted and explored in
23 greater depth. In particular, it would appear effective symbolic violence reduces critical
24 thinking for mentees – essentially going against the facilitative and transformative

1 learning mentoring attempts to facilitate. Indeed, the uncritical reproduction of doxic
2 coaching cultures outwardly poses challenges towards mentee coaches' learning,
3 development and dispositions towards best practice. It could be argued the NGB's ID and
4 associated mentoring programme worked to transform 'the habitus of those on both sides
5 of the mentoring dyad' with the intention to 'produce/reproduce habitus in a particular
6 form... that is determined by the needs of employers and other dominant groupings, rather
7 than by mentors or mentees themselves' (Colley, 2003, p. 17).

8 Despite this, additional research into formalised sports coach mentoring
9 programmes is required, as there is currently a paucity of evidence available examining
10 cultural reproduction within this area. Indeed, researchers might look to investigate
11 further the role of mentors' and mentees' habituses in either embodying or resisting
12 entrenched coaching cultures. Bourdieu (1993, p. 150) argues that 'every exercise of
13 power is accompanied by a discourse aimed at legitimising the power of the group that
14 exercises it'. In this research, we can view the NGB's ID culture as a discourse to maintain
15 the doxa and interests of the dominant players within the coaching field. Exploiting a
16 dominant discourse in the form of the ID coaching culture and associated social practices
17 allowed the NGB to act as a 'rite of institution', enabling mentors to legitimise their
18 position and gain influence over their mentees due to their enhanced symbolic capital
19 (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991). By misrecognising the dominant discourse, mentees are placed
20 to receive assistance from the NGB who act as an unquestioned authority, establishing a
21 logic of practice for mentees to adhere to (Bourdieu, 1990). Therefore, the arbitrary
22 culture is produced and reproduced by mentees whilst the political nature of the act
23 remains hidden (Cushion & Jones, 2014). In closing this paper, sporting organisations
24 might look to employ a critical lens over coaching cultures and what is considered as
25 legitimate knowledge within mentoring provision, helping to 'rework coaches' [mentors],

- 1 mentees'] habitus, discourse and knowledge, thus facilitating an expansion of alternative
- 2 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 National Governing Body delivered coach education provision.

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