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Student name:	<input type="text" value="Josh Barnett"/>	Student ID:	<input type="text" value="20007268"/>
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Supervisor:	<input type="text" value="Christian Edwards"/>		
Comments	Section		
	Title and Abstract (5%) Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.		
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Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

SPORTS COACHING

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**‘LADS AND BANTER’: and its production of cultural and
social identities within a Men’s Semi-Professional Football
team.**

**Dissertation submitted under the discipline of Coaching
Science**

Josh Jamie Barnett

ST20007268

**‘LADS AND BANTER’: and its production of cultural
and social identities within a Men’s Semi-
Professional Football team.**

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetropolitán Caerdydd

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to generate an in depth understanding into the phenomena of banter including its role in the production and maintenance of social cohesion and hierarchies. The data was collected using an ethnographic approach where by observational field notes were generated from training sessions, gym sessions and on match days. Following this, a focus group was carried out with a selection of players to gain rich understanding of previous experiences that revolve around banter. Previous literature from Currie (1991), Eveslage and Delany (1998), Parker (2001), Palmer (2011) and Clayton (2012) assisted to the framework for how to present and interpret all the data collected. It was through adopting this theoretical framework that this study revealed that banter was used within an inclusive form of discourse formulating an identity for the team. The banter itself lived within all experiences and progressed through constant interaction to produce a more cohesive group. Through the production of hierarchies however, banter fluctuates to accommodate certain positions such as the coach.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

The traditional coaching science literature (e.g. Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinkel & Samela, 1999; Lacy & Golstone, 1990) has focused upon the application of systematic observation strategies through quantitative description. Such work portrayed sports coaching as a simplistic rationalistic endeavour. According to Smith (1989), related research argued that the nature of coaching was a mechanistic activity, one that was measurable and causally derived, thus is a predictable and controllable practice.

While this work has provided valuable knowledge surrounding the pedagogical strategies used, it has limited our knowledge of the social nature and understanding of sports coaching (Bowes & Jones, 2006). This is particularly so in terms of offering an insight into the complex reality in which coaches work and how they manage it (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Recent coaching science literature on the other hand has come to recognise the social and dynamic essence of sports coaching (Jones, 2007). Acknowledging the contested nature of the activity, Potrac and Jones (2009) have argued that coaching is in fact a personal, power-ridden endeavour where coaches use many and varied strategies to reach a desired end.

This recent engagement with the problematic nature of the activity has portrayed coaching as a social process, comprising a series of contested outcomes among structurally influenced agents, in production from an ever changing environment (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003). Similarly, Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour and Hoff (2000) argue coaching is non-existent within the social vacuum, but lives in the complexities of modern day sport. Such work resonates with that of Jones, Armour and Potrac, (2004) who consider the connection between coach and athlete within particular contextual settings to lie at the very core of the activity. This

more recent conceptualisation has led some researchers such as Potrac and Jones (2009) to argue that in fact, social interaction is at the heart of the coaching process.

In attempting to uncover the social nature of sports coaching, several academics (e.g. Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglan, 2011) have offered significant avenues of such an exploration. Indeed, the work of Jones and colleagues has offered an interesting portrayal of how the tenants of the sociological literature can help inform the messiest of jobs. In this sense, Cushion (2010a) believes that adopting different social theories allows for a more meaningful theory to practice link to help develop the field. For example, Purdy, Potrac and Jones (2008) have investigated the use of power within sports coaching and how it manifests itself within the complex environment. Likewise, Potrac and Marshall (2011) have investigated the notion of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) and how coaches use such a theoretical peg to negotiate the contested sporting arena.

While there continues to be a proliferation of research that builds upon coaching as a sociological endeavour, there remains a paucity of research that investigates the use of humour and in particular banter within the coaching context. According to the work of Aggerholm and Ronglan (2012) the need to explore such a concept allows for an improved understanding of coaching as it enables an insight into how types of communication can interact within the social climate, forcing situations to alter. While academics (e.g. Jones, 2006b; Potrac & Jones, 2009) have pointed to the liberated nature of exploring the complex nature of sports coaching to argue that there remains' many unexplored avenues. As a result, additional research into this area would be particularly useful in helping understand the complexities inherent in the social power dynamic that exists within the coaching milieu.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The purpose of this study will be to explore how discursive practices such as banter or trash talk shape the cultural and social identities of a men's semi professional football team. In doing so, it will aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the how trash talk helps shape and produce sub cultures, individual and group identities. The overall aims will be addressed through two mutual agreeing objectives.

- a) to understand what types of banter are used within the situation.
- b) to examine how banter contributes and fluctuates due to the production of 'social hierarchy's' in a sporting sub-cultures.
- c) to highlight how banter plays a significant role in maintaining group cohesion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the literature that portrays sports coaching as a social endeavour. In terms of structure, there will be several themed sections that highlight the growth of the coaching literature in recent years. The intention is to provide a brief insight into the historical landscape that surrounds the coaching literature, which is followed by more recent engagements with coaching research, an insight into coaching as a social practice and finally a review of interaction and its significance within the coaching context. Following this outline, the role of power and discourse within sports coaching will be discussed. The penultimate section highlights the role of banter within the coaching milieu leading into a conclusion that will discuss how banter shapes sporting sub cultures.

2.2 Historical Summary of the Sports Coaching Literature

The traditional approach to coaching had a tendency to paint an unproblematic picture of the coaching profession (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Indeed, much of this research (e.g. Bloom et al., 1999) undertook an analysis of the systematic observation of coaches and athletes. The intended nature, focused on instructional strategies that were of quantitative description. Likewise, the work of Pratt and Eitzen (1989) examined the relationship between effective leadership, decision-making and coaching style. According to Cushion (2007) such work attempted to analyse the coaching process through the sum of individual parts.

This empirical work led many academics to carry out research that explained coaching through a series of models. In this respect, Jones (2006a) proposed that the purpose of these models was to offer a framework for observing good and bad practice. This fragmented approach considered both the models of coaching (e.g.

Fairs, 1987; Franks, Sinclair, Thompson & Goodman, 1986; Lyle 2002) and the models for coaching (Cote, Salmela & Russell, 1995; d'Arripe-Longueville, Fournier & Dubois, 1998). Unlike the previous work that was informed by quantitative data much of this research used qualitative techniques, most notably in the form of interviews exploring the value of the coach-athlete relationship.

Cushion (2006) critiqued the modelled approach to coaching due to its simplistic nature for understanding the phenomenon. Cushion believed simplistic approach failed to embrace the messy nature of the activity. The reliance on models for coaching did not allow for any unplanned occurrences that were ever present within the environment. Thus, many delved into other avenues of understanding sports coaching.

A more recent understanding however, portrays coaching to be an interactive and communal endeavour, which is in fact a social practice (Jones, Morgan & Harris, 2012). Indeed, Jones, Potrac, Hussain and Cushion (2006) believe that due to the social complexities of the activity many social and cultural issues can influence it. Whilst this may be the case, there is clear evidence to suggest that much of the previous literature lacks the connection between the lived experiences of those involved (Jones Armour & Potrac, 2003). Therefore the need to further explore and understand the sociological aspect of sports coaching will assist in demystifying the mythical art of the activity (Jones et al., 2012).

2.3. A more recent conceptualisation of Sports Coaching

The recent engagement of sports coaching began to direct research upon the sociological interactions rather than following the book. D'Arripe-Longueville, Saury, Fournier and Durand (2001) investigated the interactions that form between a coach and athlete with the attempt to understand the activity. Although this directed the research away from the rationalistic approach of coaching, it still failed to understand the reasoning behind why interactions were occurring. Instead attention was paid to the delivery of technical information, which allowed only a limited view of interaction within the coaching context (Ronglan, 2011).

Even though the study attempted to grapple with the complexities of coaching, it still failed to encompass the so-called social agenda of the activity. It is from this point an increasing number of scholars subsequently turned to sociological theory (Pringle, 2007) to offer a more nuanced portrayal of coaching. Several authors such as Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2004) sought to develop a more meaningful perspective on how coaches and athletes work within the coaching environment. It was this line of enquiry that attempted to look at interaction and how coaches attempted to use power within their approach.

2.4 Coaching as a social practice

The essence of coaching has become the subject of much debate, indeed the work of Cushion (2007) and Jones (2000) have highlighted that coaches engage within a social process that involves numerous interactive variables. With this in mind, Jones (2000) suggests coaching can be considered a unique occupation that combines an array of roles. Furthermore, Jones, Armour and Potrac (2002) suggest that sociology theory can help us to understand the essence of all relationships within the heart of

sports coaching. Cushion (2010a, 2010b) builds on this through presenting coaching practice as a socially constructed phenomenon that sits in social and cultural contexts whereby the athlete, coach and environment are interacting.

The work of Denison (2007); Lyle (1999); Potrac and Jones (1999) engage with sociological theory to understand the complexities of social factors involved within coaching. This moves away from the 'traditional models' approach of coaching whereby Jones, Armour and Potrac (2003) now express the coaching process to be primarily based around the social exchange, that coaches are social beings acting within an environment. The more recent acknowledgement of sports coaching (Ronglan, 2010) has built on the concept a social activity through empirical and theoretical studies.

Work by theorists such as Foucault has been recognised as related and applicable to the sociology of sport by theorists such as Jones. Although Foucault did not primarily focus on sport, his focus point being on the body and how it's dominated makes his work resonate with the importance of coach and athlete development through sport. He believed that we do not act in the way we do through our own will, but through our constant interaction and power relations. Indeed the cultural environment formulates and frames rules that help to understand ones self (Foucault, 1972). Foucault's work on discourse and power has helped inform/shape the ways in which sports coaching can be viewed as a social practice. Nonetheless, not many have adopted Foucault's theories to understand coaching regardless of its importance to understand those with power (Markula & Martin, 2007).

Another key social theorist is Erving Goffman. His work on stigma and interaction has provided theoretical implications for sports coaching. Goffman's work has been criticised for under-theorising the notion of power, as noted by Jones, Armour and Potrac (2004) as a core notion of coaching. Dennis and Martin (2005) oppose this view, stating that Goffman's micro-focus does indeed provide an insight into the social-exchange involved within the power phenomena. By using Goffman's work to view coaching as this sociological endeavor, we are able to de-construct the social process where the rules of engagement are established, enforced challenged and broken down (Dennis & Martin, 2007). Although theorists such as Goffman and Foucault were seen to differ in terms of subject area with Foucault focusing on discourse and Goffman concentrating on the social exchange, both theorists have the common denominator of the social process in which power is omnipresent (Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglan, 2011).

2.5 Interaction and its significance within the coaching context

As is previously mentioned, such tenants as Goffman and Foucault have led us to better understand the social sphere of sports coaching (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2002). The interactive social nature of the activity is not to be followed from a book or guide, but through notions such as power, interaction and discourse within the social context of athletes and coaches. For impact on performance to occur, naturally the coaches frequently engage in interaction with athletes. Thus, social interaction can be viewed as the essence of coaching, with coach-athlete relationships being at the heart of the activity (Jones et al., 2004). When interaction occurs often it may result in misunderstanding and confusion, however a team consisting of social beings can internalise informal rules and norms of behavior depending on what is regulated

through the team as communicational guidelines. Although both Goffman and Foucault were both exploring different aspects of sociology, they both concentrated on the social processes through which power is formed, how individuals and groups interact and why they do so in what manner in it is undertaken, which interaction takes place can be viewed as discourse. The following subheadings in this chapter will provide an in depth insight into how interaction, power & discourse) offer a valid viewpoint on how to understand sports coaching through the social lens.

Social interaction, as stated above is significant in sports coaching due to the impact that interaction has on coach-athlete relationships. Interaction is often affected by roles and expectations that exist within a situation, for example those of a football team. These roles and expectations act as unwritten rules within the group in which we are acting (Ronglan, 2011). Within a number of social encounters the rules to abide by appear indefinite; hence, there is greater stress on framing the situation (Goffman, 1974). A common example of this in this context could be seeing reserve players, or coaches outside of sporting environment. The uncertainty of how to approach them is not understood outside the sporting context. The social identity that a coach may hold could restrict the approach made from a player due to how they might want the coach to view them.

According to Goffman (1974), during social encounters individuals present themselves to others in their own way in order to present an impression and to frame someone's idea of them (Smith, 1999). However, it is not about the ability to act out a passage through social interaction, but honouring the role itself (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004) as a failure to maintain personal image can result in future problematic social encounters. Revealing yourself as a social being is done with an attempt to hold membership within a social group. Sands (2002) stated that certain requisites are

necessary to claim membership to a sporting identity. Within a sporting context, if a new player comes to training and does not uphold a high standard of training, that player is disregarded from the group in the social subculture and will find it hard to interact fully with the group. This links to the work of Donnelley and Young (1988), who drew upon two differing sporting sub-cultures: rock climbers and rugby players. They explored how new members of the particular sub-culture were socialised into the respective groups. Donnelly and Young (1988) proposed a socialisation model that suggested socialisation into a particular sub-culture requires stages, varying from the actual recruitment and selection from peers, to the acceptance of the so called 'newcomer' into the group. The relevance of this model is key within this literature. The existing players show power over newcomers by holding the decision whether they are good enough to join the social group, abiding to the requisites of rules that are socially constructed.

2.5.1 The role of power and discourse in sports coaching

Touraine (1981) notes that all social relationships are based on aspects of power. Foucault introduced power relations as a major contribution to how we are made (Dennison & Scott-Thomas, 2007) through interaction rather than their own will or inner essence. Foucault's (1983) view on power is of a relationship in which our actions lead the possibilities of others actions. His regard to power was that it is not a tiered, top-down model, but a series of interactions through the relations of various individuals and groups. Foucault expressed how our actions were not formed by something we had decided ourselves, but through our existence and consistent involvement in culture (May, 2005). In this respect, power forms a key aspect of the coach-athlete relationship, and the discourse used from the coach aims for power

over the athlete in the attempt to guide them through performance. Such discursive behaviour produces the effect of productive power, but not absolute power. Absolute power is never gained, as an athlete is never left powerless due to the control they have over his or her own decisions. Such thoughts resonate with the work of Tauber (1985) who believes that power is in the hands of those that are superior. Coaches apply their discourse in the attempt to guide the power relations with athletes where by the athlete abandons their own actions and follows the lead of the coach.

Many studies have adopted Foucault's theory to understand practices (Chapman, 1997; Johns & Johns, 2000; Heikkala, 1993) but still failing to explore sports coaching to understand why coaches act as they do along with how can they improve themselves. This seems bizarre considering Foucault's clear indication of the importance of understanding those with responsibility (e.g. coaches) and how power fluctuates in order to create relationships with athletes (Markula & Martin, 2007).

Markula and Pringle (2006) also abided to Foucault's understanding of power to uncover the multidirectional workings of the coach-athlete relationship. Their perspective illustrated that although a coach can amend fractions of the environment (e.g. leaving a player on the bench), the player is still free and able to act in any way they please. This shows that although coaches hold the hierarchical role, athletes are never without power, and once the athlete acts this then effects the coach in future decisions. To gain a deeper understanding into how the coach can affect each player's decisions (or vice versa) it's important to identify the discursive practices that are used.

'Discourse' underpinned the work that Foucault set out to establish through his analysis. Discourse is often confused with ideology but can be defined by Pringle (2007, p. 387) as "a relatively consistent that people use to navigate social life and make sense of their experiences." It shapes what we perceive and understand through unwritten rules and guidance of social practices (Johns & Johns, 2000). Foucault believed that through the analysis of discourse we are able to distinguish what shapes our thoughts and actions we take based on our own rules (Johns & Johns, 2000).

The discourse that claims 'coach as a leader' is framed by and better understood as athletes following others and disregarding their own autonomy. An individual is not himself or herself powerful, but the position they have that is selected through discursive practices gains power over others. This adds to how we are not made a certain way, it is through the relations of discursive practices involving power and interaction that allow the possibility for change, (Dennison & Scott-Thomas, 2011). It is the different forms of discourse that need to be explored to understand how each can offer an insight into how the complex sociological environment develops.

Within sporting sub cultures there are a complex blend of enabling and constraining discourses that help shape the contours of sport. As such, these discursive practices may influence the latent dynamics of power and interaction within the socio-cultural environment (Ronglan, 2007). Ronglan (2007) discussed the importance of actively taking part in the form of shared obligation such as confidence building activities. The cohesive subcultures are formed through discursive practices that stem from the interacting team members forming hierarchical roles.

2.6 'Banter' and its role within the sporting context

The interrelationship involving humour and football can be described as a masculinity exchange in which Easthorpe (1990) considers banter. In this study, banter can be seen as a form of discourse that is used within a semi-professional men's football team. Easthorpe (1990) reported that even though banter may not seem masculine, it's used to introduce a masculine exchange within power relations. Banter itself is sub sectioned into three aspects, the mode of operation being one whilst the other two refer to its content:

'As humour of comedy, banter makes use of every kind of irony, sarcasm, pun, clichéd reply, and so is an example of a joke...The content of banter has a double function. Outwardly, banter is aggressive, a form of which the masculine ego asserts itself. Inwardly however, banter depends on a close, intimate and personal understanding of the person who is the butt of the attack. It thus works as a way of affirming the bond of love between men while appearing to deny it' (Wagg, 2004 p.88).

Banter can be used in an effort to get an opponent's mind off of the game (Eveslage & Delaney, 1998), where other may utilise it in order to motivate or "pump themselves up". Finlay and Johnson (1997) use an instance between the schools of St John and Greaves to indicate the direct playful use of playful racism and/or chauvinist behaviour towards one another, producing hegemonic masculinity and ego orientated personalities to form certain hierarchical roles. Through this directed banter they are able to generate a relationship whilst finding the normalising rules that apply within their situation (racism). While this is okay there is a fine line between acceptable and unacceptable trash-talk/banter e.g. Zidane and Matterazzi in the world cup 2006 where Matterazzi's targeted comments triggered a response from Zidane (Dixon, 2007).

To undercover banter's effect on opponents, Eveslage and Delaney (1998) focused on the use of trash talk within basketball on opponents to force errors/reactions that directly link to play. A lot of their research was based around the poor communities of the African Americans within the team, finding that the media along with professionals framed the trash talk, which was then filtered through their social constructs of their high school in order to resonate with the team. Following the footsteps of their heroes to and reproducing the trash talk that is displayed by the media to produce their own hierarchies within their own team. A secondary outcome of this study illustrated how banter is used within the team based around geographical groundings of other players for example, the background they have or where they are from.

2.7 How 'Banter' shapes sporting subcultures

Although there has been an attempt to undercover social interactions in sport, there has been a paucity of research on humour and in particular the banter that lies within the sporting sub-cultures. Studies that have investigated the use of banter tended to direct their methodology towards the use of trash talk on opponents (e.g. Eveslage & Delaney, 1998; Staffo, 1996) and how this is affecting the game its self. Other studies (e.g. Palmer, 2011; Clayton, 2012) focused on settings from the sporting context with how alcoholism forms a direct correlation to the production of hierarchies and group identifies through banter within a sports team.

Parker (2001) came closest with a study on the youth players of an English professional football club. The aim was to understand how the culture was shaped and maintained through official and unofficial institutional norms. This study reveals an insight into what methods were used in order to produce a solid cohesive group.

The interesting results of this study noted the main use of banter was directed at players in relationships. This is the first production of a hierarchy that has come out of a study where by the players without girlfriends would banter those in relationships, showing their hegemonic masculinity, thus placing themselves at the top of the hierarchal chain. In Parker's study, the banter was introduced as a way of integrating the group's togetherness of all aiming for the same goals, that we do not need any feminine aspects within the team, only each other.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures undertaken within the study. To begin, there will be a justification for why a qualitative approach is the most appropriate method for the intended nature of the thesis. This leads to a brief overview of ethnography as a qualitative genre. The research design is then described, paying particular focus to the procedures followed. These include an introduction to the participants and club in context, the methods of data collection (field notes, participant observation and focus groups) and how the data will be analysed. The concluding section outlines the ethical considerations associated with study and how they were addressed.

3.2 Proposing a qualitative approach

Prior to undergoing this study through qualitative analysis, it is important to discuss the rationale as to why a qualitative approach is used. Black (1994) states that the very essence of qualitative research aids our understanding of the nature, strengths and actions of a phenomena and thus siding within this holistic approach allowing any complexities involved within human behaviour. This allows for an assumption that qualitative research adopts different methods to that of quantitative studies (McNamee, Oliver & Wainwright, 2007). The amount of qualitative research has increased throughout sport in order to generate more in depth, rich information from an insiders view, maintaining emphasis of the participants perspective in order to contextualise the situation from an experience (Hardy, Bardley & Zolitschka, 1996).

3.3 Ethnography

This study adopted an ethnographic approach whereby the researcher showed commitment to the experience and exploration of a cultural setting through participant observation (Sparks & Smith, 2014). According to O'Reilly (2012), ethnography can be defined as:

'A practice that evolves in design as the study progresses; involves direct and sustained contact with human beings, in the context of their daily lives, over a prolonged period of time; draws on a family of methods, usually including participant observation and conversation; respects the complexity of the social world; and therefore tells rich, sensitive and credible stories (p. 3).

Ethnography originated from the University of Chicago where the beginnings of ethnography were explored through sociology (Deegan, 2001). It was through this broad understanding between the years of 1892-1942 that many psychologists created the Chicago school of ethnography between 1917 and 1942. The 'core Chicago ethnographies' was produced by psychologists and based around every day life to generate the shared understanding of society. Although there was no exclusively grounded work from the Chicago School, the outcomes of the work certainly held emphasis upon how ethnographic fieldwork has been carried out to the present day.

Ethnography aims to understand the culture of particular groups behaviours through the lens of the group members (Krane & Baird, 2005). A differing concept of an ethnographic approach is to explore what people do and why they do it before generating any understandings of behaviours and beliefs (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999). The work by the Chicago school of sociology was deemed as

grounded research within ethnography whereby they would conduct field research and participant observation on real people (O'Riley, 2012). Much of the grounded theories within ethnography consist of approaches such as:

1. Simultaneous data collection and analysis
2. Finding emerging themes from early data analysis
3. Finding basic social processes from data
4. Inductive construction of understandings and explanations from these processes'
5. The conjunction of categories within a theoretical framework of which assists the understanding of causes, conditions and consequences of the process (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001)

This approach allows many to learn and understand aspects of their lives through the observation and understanding of lived experiences (O'Riley, 2012). McGrath and Chananie-Hill's (2009) ethnographic approach to their study had them view behaviours within the subculture of weightlifting. They adopted an insiders approach to the ethnographic study, this way they were able to view the developing rapport. This current study adopted this ethnographical approach to provide insights into the social exchange of individuals involved with banter from a men's football team. This is based around the assumption that observing the group closely over a prolonged period of time allows the ethnographer to better understand the behaviours (Sparks & Smith, 2014). A key task of ethnography is gaining access to the group and this was already achieved through the researchers prior involvement within the football team, this allowed for a better rapport and truer stories. Participants were able to be themselves, as they would feel as though the researcher were not observing.

Critiques of ethnography have risen through the work of Clifford (1986b) which focuses around the impossibility to reproduce true events based around social environments. The use of told 'stories' indicates to Clifford (1986) that these real live occurrences are only revisited through the fragmented imagination of the ethnographer, thus showing the subjective approach. Indeed Sparks and Smith (2014) expanded on this, reporting the lack of ability to recall correct behaviours due to the subjective natures of observing. Davies (2008) stressed another important aspect of ethnography that relied on retaining the primacy of research around practices in order to maximise relevance for professionals within the future. The observations from this current study were therefore carried out in familiar situations such as training, matches and in the changing rooms. As described later, a focus group was conducted in order to strengthen and back up interpretations of observations along with understanding more in depth data around the phenomenon.

3.4 Methods and procedure

The study in question followed the ethnographic approach beginning with observations of the players at Tribain FC throughout 3 training sessions and 2 matches a week. The process of data collection followed an order beginning with observations based around the training and match day environment in which banter was evident. The extensive observations made were transcribed as field notes in a diary after every training session/match based on the researchers thoughts, feelings and experience from the field. Due to the overlapping commitments of the researcher (observer, player, teammate) it seemed appropriate to hold a focus group involving a sample of players with a semi-structured interview with the attempt to generate the rich experiences and understandings of banter from the team in context. This begins

with a deductive method of research involving the development of an idea based around existing theories (Gratton & Jones, 2010). However it becomes inductive as it associates itself more so with qualitative studies (Gratton & Jones 2010) whereby it follows a process of collecting data and analysing it to generate and understanding or explanation.

3.4.1 Observation and Field Notes

Participant observations were made over a 3-month period from September until December at the clubs training ground and match day facilities. This prolonged immersion in the field required a certain amount of ethnographic skills. In order to collect the rich data needed conscientious observation of the mundane social interactions and normal conversations between the individuals were required (Krane & Baird, 2005). In following such a protocol the intention was to be unobtrusive rather unobtrusive so that the natural behaviours of the individuals could be observed.

The data retrieved through experiences within the environment were reported in field notes. Rather than providing detailed notes within the field loose notes were made and then written up in extended notes later that evening. Such a procedure echo's the work of Mulhall (2003) who suggests that providing loose accounts within the field allows for the intuitive experience of being within the culture not being lost. Field notes were obtained as soon as training and games finished in order to generate the clearest and most honest account of any interpretation.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

Although observational methods offer many advantages such as observing the phenomenon in its natural setting (Gratton & Jones, 2010) there are many fall backs of this technique such as the misinterpretation of the phenomenon. A Semi-structured focus group interview was introduced following the field notes and observations from training and matches. Through this the researcher was able to formulate a framework of questions based around any field notes and previous literature (Patton, 1990). This holds value in understanding the participants individual and group beliefs based around the situations that occurred. This ethnographic technique hoped to elaborate on anything previously collected as well as gathering further understanding of the phenomenon that is banter.

The focus group concentrated on 5 participants in which a semi-structured interview will be conducted to enable the interview to have a framework that can be expanded upon. This can provide a more depth discussion based around the phenomenon allowing for experiences and understandings to trigger and overlap each other (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This focus group allowed the researcher to raise more in depth questions such as why things happened in order to generate a stronger understanding (Harris & Jones, 2012).

The interview consisted of a brief introduction into the nature of the study to ease the participants in and make them feel comfortable before embarking on semi-structured questions (see appendix a for the interview structure). This allowed an open-ended discussion to take place based around emerging themes from the relevant literature along with the observations and field notes recorded. The researcher acted as a facilitator to the interview, whose role was to ensure a supportive atmosphere was present to provide participants the opportunity to

express personal, multiple and conflicting viewpoints base around the nature of the study (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) to again increase chances of richer findings (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

3.5 Participants and club in context.

The participants that were used within this study consisted of male footballers aged between 18 and 25 years old studying at a University within Wales, whether it is on an Undergraduate, Masters or PHD course. The participants were also members of their respected University Men's First Team. Prior to the study the aims and the nature of the study were explained to all participants with the explanation of their inclusion to the study. At this point all participants were addressed explaining changes in place for autonomy and confidentiality prior to any consent form being signed to be included within the investigation.

Tribain University Men's Football Club was the club that this research was based around, in particular the first team players. It is a Men's Semi-Professional Football Club that has become very successful over the past 18 months through their performances on the pitch and team ethos within the environment.

3.6 Data Analysis

When undergoing qualitative research Marshall and Rossman (1999) note that both data results and analysis are to be brought together in order to best understand the data. The integration of results and discussion will enable to reader to best follow the interpretations of findings.

The data analysis followed guidelines of coding set out by Miles and Huberman (1994) beginning by organising all collected data into an assigned code or

category. Once these codes are constructed the researcher read through the data, then 'axial coding' took place where the qualitative data was read through and statements were picked out based around the emerging and reoccurring codes/themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once these key themes had been underlined and all transcriptions narrowed into their relevant codes, the researcher then discovered patterns and explanations within the codes with an attempt to relate certain codes and why they relate. Finally reporting this data back and summarising the explanation of these concepts to discover what was explained to be confirmatory or contradictory to the study.

3.7. Trustworthiness

Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne and Chatzisarantis (2001) relate the importance of trustworthiness to the interviewers technical skills. Proposing that the more trustworthy the relationship of researcher and participant, leads to the more reliable and credible data. In this study the relationship between the researcher and all participants holds a strong link as they are all part of the university team. This way the subjects feel a sense of friendship with the researcher and this can lead to the richest and most honest narratives of their experiences.

3.8 Ethical Procedures

In order to adhere to the appropriate standards the ethical issues within this study will be addressed through recourse to the Cardiff Metropolitan University's and the British Sociological Association's (BSA) ethical procedures. Understandably, ethical issues arise though qualitative research as a consequence of the sensitive intrusive aspects of questioning and therefore care must be taken for sensitive subjects

involving private and personal life (Holloway, 1997). In order to adhere to this, participants will be provided with consent forms prior to the group discussion notifying them of the nature of the study (Appendix B) consisting of verbal and written consent signed by the participants (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

The next key ethical consideration to be addressed was the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Abiding to this protocol resonates with the work of Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000) who stressed that it is imperative to ensure the right amount of protection of human subjects or participants is undertaken at all times. McNamee et al. (2007) report that certain insurances/promises with regards to autonomy and data collection needs to be carried out. This is due to the sensitive experiences that may be shared by participants through memory, may well come to the surface along with the participant in question (Mason, 1996). Following the importance of autonomy, all subjects within the study were assigned pseudonyms in order to cover the identity that is associated with their experiences.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND

DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

There were three key themes generated as a result of analysing and coding all transcriptions including individual/group identity through banter, 'We do everything together'; banter involvement in social inclusion and cohesion and banter differentiation through forming hierarchies. These three themes are underpinned by many subthemes that may sometimes overlap to offer another perspective on how that particular aspect has affected the group through banter. Drawing upon numerous extracts from the focus group and observational field notes allowed for the best insight into the rich findings around banter. These findings were backed up through relevant literature to assist in the understanding of each phenomenon.

4.2 Individual/group Identity through banter

The work of Giddins (1991) expressed how identity is forever fluctuating and reshaping itself through all forms of social endeavour. In this study, it is evident how the use of banter was used to shape the identity of an individual as well as the group identity. The following extracts from the focus group and field notes will outline how people may be targeted/socialised into the group norms of identity through the lens of banter:

Trev: "As a team we all dress very similarly, with skinny jeans etc and no other team in the university or people around the university really dress the way we do but as a team, when someone goes away from that, then sometimes jokes and banter will be directed towards them. Not necessarily viciously but it will be directed towards them."

James: "Collin dresses differently and dresses poorly and we take the micky out of him wearing that hat every single day, and stuff like that...but it's just the culture we create for ourselves within the group."

Such remarks based around banter from dress-sense can be highlighted from the field extract from a training session, for example:

(Field notes extracted – Thursday November 21st 2013)

Ray: “Nelson look at you’re fuckin jacket lad! You in the cast for cool runnings? “

Dean: “Yeh look at them black and yellow racing stripes kid! Feel da riddem, feel da rhyme, get on down, its bobsled time, cool running’s!”

Nelson: “Don’t you laugh David, yours is just as mingin as mine! We are in this together!”

This form of banter was aimed at the individuals for not abiding to the unwritten social group identity/culture of acceptable behaviour. James’ comment of “culture we create for ourselves within the group” suggests that this identity of ‘clothing’ was that each player must dress the same; which was created by the group itself. Chaitin (2004) identified that when an identity is formed, certain aspects of the person would be affected to stay within the norms constructed by the group. Parker’s (2001) study also found clothing to be an aspect where players must keep within the social identity in order to be ‘one of the team’. This resonates with why the player’s received this banter; they have not stuck to the norms of training (blue sweatshirts) and thus received banter from it. The banter itself was used by Nelson as a reference form a film (Cool Running’s), which he knew that everyone in the group would understand as it’s a popular film, therefore initiating the ‘slagging’ battle. The aim is to come out on top and be the superior ‘alfa-male’. Nelson then decides rather than talking back to Ray, he would introduce David who was a first year player and therefore lower on the hierarchical scale. This then moves the direction of banter towards a subgroup leading to a shared social banter rather than the ‘match’ that Ray had instigated.

The social identity that has been formed through interactions and discursive practices helped to inform the players similar individual and group identity (Jenkins, 2008). The next form of identity explored through banter was the 'need to be strong and muscular'. Much of the quotations to follow resonate with the literature based around the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1987) and how the play of masculine banter shapes the identity of the group:

James: "Collin looks in the mirror and we say he's got the body of an 8-year old, and we always take the micky out of that. Then there's the better physiques in the group like myself, Ray, Trevor, (laughter) and we poke fun at the smaller lads and in focus as well, 'He's not lifting much. He's not squatting much.'"

In order to reinforce these relations regarding shape between James and Collin, below is an extract taken from a focus session where by first team players would have to attend on a Monday morning for strength and conditioning programme:

(Field notes extracted from focus – Monday October 7th 2013)

James: "Collin look at your fuckin shape ya ironing board within ya little chicken legs. Any dange of some calf raises kid!"

Collin: "Don't you worry bout me, its that ski slope you call a nose you gotta be careful of. Absolute shnoz!"

James: "Says you, jew nose! (James makes hand jester reference to a large nose).

This masculine exchange is displayed through banter from James expressing that Collin is not part of their identity, he need to be big and muscular like himself. Connell (1987) does imply that there are numerous masculinities involved within a team, but they will be playing out for 'hegemonic masculinity' that sits above all others within the group identity. It is through this attempt of hegemonic masculinity that James displays the identity that "you must be big to be in the group" which

asserts his physical capital over Collin (Bourdieu, 1986). This coincides with Clayton (2010) who suggests men must not demonstrate a negative aspect or weaknesses of themselves. Therefore as seen above, Collin replied with an attack at James' nose. By not revealing any weakness, Collin's response complies within the trash talk battle where the play of masculinities aims to find the 'macho man' through the sense of banter.

Players will assert their masculinities within a group in order to create this identity of the alpha male or a superior in a group. The introduction of alcoholism and feminism has been evident throughout this study for the production of a masculine identity (Curry, 1991, 1998). Kimmel and Aronson (2004, p. 444) report that a 'jock culture' that's created "devalues all things feminine" and thus the introduction of drinking and 'nights out with the lads' leads to individuals being given banter for not complying within the group identity. As this group identity progressed an understanding was made that the players must comply within three categories; they must dress the same, be in good physical shape, drink a lot and go home with members of the opposite sex on nights out. The following extracts from the group discussion describes situations where banter may be targeted towards players for not abiding to the socially constructed norms of alcoholism:

James "When we have nights out who can drink and who can pull birds and stuff like that, it comes into it there. We bring that out especially at the next training session or a Thursday it's things like "Ah, did you drill?" "Who?" and if it's a minging bird or stuff like that, you always take the micky out of someone, like Collin again, I'm sorry I keep bringing him up, but someone who never, ever pulls or barely ever drinks and stuff like that, he takes banter for that."

The field note extract that follows described a situation where by a player was on the receiving end of banter following actions from the night out before.

(Field note extract from training – Thursday 5th December 2013)

Nelson: “Oh Collin, bang last night?”

Ray: “Corse he fuckin never, may aswell of not come! Don’t bring shit to the table drinkin them wkds all night. No wonder a bird don’t wanna go home with ya.”

Deejay: “Shock I drilled”.

Brett: “Who’d you drill?”

Deejay: “Betty”

James, Collin, Nelson and Ray: “Beep beep beep beep beep!”

It was apparent through the transcripts that having nights out led to the players need to display masculinity through drinking and sex. This alcohol consumption relates to the expectation that team players should be seen to be drinking more so than others (Grossbard et al., 2009; Peretti- Watel et al., 2003). This is because the team have socially constructed the norm that ‘we drink together and drink a lot’. Black, Lawson and Fleishman (1999) propose that alcohol and sporting masculinity are often used to reiterate one another, in this instance banter is used to display femininity through banter about drinking: “Drinkin them wkds all night” which was perceived as a woman’s drink was used by Ray as a way to refer to Collin as a girl to display his feminine weakness. Deejay then steps in to show the group his identity, that it was easy for him to be one of the ‘lads’. Furthermore, the group have developed a unique socially constructed banter with the use of “Beep”. This reinforces the group identity it has a shared meaning amongst the members: in this instance as if to say, “that’s the same girl as before.” This highlights the group’s general shared belief on female encounters that not only must you take a girl home, but it must be someone new as to go home with the same girl over and over is not accepted. The ‘superior’ players commonly used the phrase “Beep, beep, beep” with association to repetitively being with the same girl. This informed their group identity

for what is accepted before players will comply and engage within the process of banter (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997).

4.3 'We do everything together'; banter involvement in social inclusion for Cohesion of the group

Social inclusion has been explored by many scholars (Mocconkey, Dowling, Hassan & Menke, 2012; Liu & Yi-De, 2009), however this section will illustrate how banter plays a specific role for social inclusion for cohesion within a group. Berman and Phillips (2000) delivered the term social inclusion to be:

“Social inclusion/exclusion is connected with the principles of equality and equity and the structural causes of their existence. The goal is a basic level of inclusion with help of supportive infrastructures, labor conditions and collective goods in such a way that those mechanisms causing exclusion will be prevented or minimized” (2000, p. 332).

This inclusive theme was evident throughout many observations made within training whereby players would always be together. They would all meet together before every game and every training session and these relationships would be inclusive and promote cohesion within the group. For example through numerous discussions that consisted of playful taunting and banter are evident in the narrative below.

Dean: “I’ve found by playing games and training more, that’s how everyone got to know you a bit better, because you’re always with the boys, with the team and everyone’s looking after you when you play, everyone’s looking out for you. “

Ray: “ You make the friendships because of football and they become part of your life”

James: “You’ve always got everyone around you and you enjoy doing it”

The above states how there is a clear social inclusive ethos about the team, however the next extract from the focus group highlights how geographical banter was used to initiate a social cohesive group:

Trevor: “We play the five a sides, at the start, automatically we just go into our ‘sea-siders’ group and no-one else is allowed in that and it’s like our little group of about five of us, all living in the same area who want to be on the same team every time we’re going training.”

James: “And from that one little comment about “Oh, you're the sea-siders.” They suddenly become a Welsh group, they’ve got the northern boys and the midlands lads – they’re called the Brummies.”

Trevor: “Yes, when that comes in that initiates a kind of joking side to it... that relates to it integrating into everyone, because you’ve got the southerners and they’re in their own little sub-culture, and then they’re bantering at the Welsh people...So then you get that joking across and it creates a really good competitive environment, where there’s a joke with a nice pinch of salt with it.”

Brett: “Everything just bounces off one another, as soon as one joke’s made, there are ten more jokes that can be made from it and from the reactions of people “Oh, I’ll have a nibble” and stuff like that.”

This is similar to the findings of Eveslage and Delany (1998) where players that are from the same area are more likely to join in the banter towards those from other areas. Soft banter such as “You southern softies” initiated the geographical insults, which then soon would escalate into stronger comments for example Ray who is a ‘southern softie’ and a regular starter in the first team snapped “*You Brummies are thick as shit, no wonder all your work looks like a five year old wrote it.*” The use of this comment would come across as a direct insult to many. However, as illustrated above, the relationships that have been formed through soft banter and constant social interaction have lead to the good competitive environment where players see these as jokes. The discursive practices consisting of banter informed each player that they were part of the social group and that these sub geographical groups formed the whole team, giving a sense of togetherness.

Racism was the next sub-theme that arose from the analysis of transcriptions. Deejay would receive racial banter in a form of bringing him together with the group. Deejay was the only black player within the Tribain first team squad and would often receive racist banter from other players among the group. The field notes describe situations occurred within training involving racial banter:

(Field note extract from training – Monday 30th September 2013)

The team form a circle within the warm up where they perform dynamic stretches away from the coaches', Ray spots a black man watching training and stops stretching before announcing to the team "Oh Deejay, your dad finally came to watch then?" To which Deejay replied: "Ha, yeh and there's my mum!" (Pointing towards a blackwoman).

Studies from Parker (2001), Eveslage and Delany (1998) view racial banter to be detrimental and can be seen as a negative form of trash talk or insult talk. Tthis study however, represents the use of racial banter to re-instate the importance and value of certain players within the team, making them feel a sense of the humorous situations. Brett and James' comments within the focus group build on this approach:

Brett: "I think another good example is when we bring in something like race. We'd never do that outside the football group but it's accepted in our group because he knows we're just messing around and he doesn't mind. But you wouldn't do that to any outside person, would you?"

James: "It shows that you like them as well, I think. If you can poke fun at somebody, it shows that they've got a bit about them and you appreciate them."

As displayed above, things that are said in a racial sense would never be said to anyone outside of the context. This is down to the group constructing unwritten boundaries through their constant social interaction and thus know what they could and couldn't say to Deejay. When Deejay answers, he continues this discursive practice thus displaying that he accepts and soft racism based around banter. This was done to take any sting out of the question and producing this as 'shared banter'

whereby the whole team will understand and feel a part of one discussion. Indeed Williams' (1992) work strengthens this by stating racial banter is used to 'incorporate' more so than 'alienate'.

As is illustrated within the introduction to this section, there were sub-themes in which overlapped offering different dimensions towards the understanding of banter. Alcohol consumption was the key overlapping theme and was seen in many lights to offer social cohesion. Clayton (2012) discovered that when players are found actively humiliating themselves or others this could result in a form of acceptance for positive cohesion. It was displayed in this study that alcohol consumption was used as a catalyst for the production of banter the next day. The extract from the discussion confirms how players feel this taunting and alcohol consumption assists the breaking down of barriers for inclusion:

Dean: "It was the first real night out. Before then we'd speak to them, but events happen on those sort of nights, that we won't speak of – but then you speak about them the next day and suddenly the relationships form and you've got something else to talk about".

Dean describes how it is through these experiences that players are able to then form relations and communicate easier. It is within this process how banter is used to re-enforce the strengthening relationships of players as Brett demonstrates below:

Brett: "We really just take the mick out of each other from things we've done the night before, for example if someone was really, really drunk you'd all take the mick out of them, as a team, not just individually but as a team and it gets them more involved in the group as well. When I first started I wasn't really that involved in the group but then I had a few nights out and got really drunk and that was something to talk about the next day".

James: "If you do something stupid on a night out as well, they'll bring that up and if you make a silly decision they'll bring that up and banter you about that as well."

Again this view leans towards the idea of a shared group identity. It is through excessive drinking however, that this sheds light on how the team's constant shared experiences from nights out allowed for banter to emerge within training the next day. Many studies have examined how alcoholism produces egos and masculinities (Palmer, 2011; Clayton, 2012), but neglect how the interactions as a consequence of shared drinking can act as a barrier breaker allowing for relationships to flourish. In this case, the relationship has formed through the team sharing banter towards a particular player's excessive drinking, thus making him feel at ease and 'one of the lads'. Often when someone has made a fool of themselves on a night out they will feel ashamed or embarrassed. Conversely the players at Tribain FC felt the banter on a Thursday took away from any embarrassment and therefore it was used as a catalyst for involvement.

4.4 'He picks the team': Banters' differentiation through forming hierarchies

In order to understand how banter may fluctuate due to the production of hierarchies we must first note what it can be seen as a social dominance theory where by individuals were classed into hierarchical groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Undeniably Wolfe, Jaffe and Crooks (2006) express that the hierarchies formed are related towards their identity and often associates itself to masculinity within the group. Within this study, hierarchy played a particular role within what banter was produced and who was allowed to push and stretch these boundaries. The three subsections within this theme will display how hierarchy is influenced through banter from each for the three perspectives; player-to-player, player to coach and coach to player. The following extract from the focus group refers to how banter will fluctuate depending on hierarchy and subjects present. Although much of the results suggest

how age and experience holds power over the hierarchy, there are instances where the banter used by players allows them to then hold a hierarchical role:

Trevor: "There are certain characters, like David, who come in and straight away automatically have that banter with him; he's quite a dull sort of character, a bit dopey, but straight away he comes in and he's had banter with Derik (Manager), even when we're having team talks together, he's not afraid to pipe up from time to time and have a bit of a banter with the lads."

David who was a first year player does not fit the criteria of what the players described to be the hierarchies of the team. However it is through the banter he produces towards other players in the team that allows him to break this social norm and therefore suggests that within this particular group, respect can be gained through the ability to produce banter. The observations that associate themselves to hierarchy through this study built on this but also revealed that it is dependent on who is present; the richness of banter will fluctuate from peer to peer:

(Field note extract – Monday 18th November 2013)

Players are talking about the night before in the stretching circle away from the coaches.

James: "Boys, who went carnage last night then?"

Nelson: "Yeah"

Ray: "Yeah boy, fuckin steamo."

Brett: "Yep, same"

Barry: "As always."

James: "No wonder you wernt at focus Barry ya sicknote! You can't handle it kid."

Barry: "Was cos I pulled lad".

James: "You mean creeped, you can't pull for shit, poor girl"

As the players approach back towards the coaches, the banter simmers to a halt and nothing more is said.

What was interesting here was that the reason banter had stopped was not the nature of bantering Barry, but the reason behind missing the early morning gym session and going out that close to a game. Ray builds on this with his comment within the group discussion:

Ray: "I think the only time it's not used is when you know you're going to be seen using it by the managerial staff. You know you're going to be seen bantering at someone when you definitely shouldn't be, that's the only time I think when it's not used, because it is a massive part of our team ethos."

When reviewing Ray's comment based around the field notes above, it was because the players knew they shouldn't be bantering Ray for going out, they should be telling him off. Nevertheless due to the importance of banter for team ethos the players will poke fun and joke similar situations since the bonds they have made would not be broken over a night out.

As displayed above the hierarchy of the coach's presence in conversation affected the peer-to-peer banter. This next subheading will focus upon how the banter from player to coach will differ and why that was so. Players throughout the study would constantly check, stretch and sometimes break the boundaries of banter towards the coach. Due to Derik's social capital that over the players, Hodgekinson and Hodgekinson (2004) express that he holds more influence over any rules. Thus the coach set an unwritten rule from his social status of manager that the level of banter he may receive was set by him. It is only through these interactions and discursive practices that the players are aware of any unspoken rules to determine how far to push the manager. The players express how the banter to use towards the manager may differ to their own and why:

Brett "We'd be a lot more personal with each other, definitely. We wouldn't poke personal fun at the coaching staff. It would just be football related with them. I don't think we'd go into personal sort of depth. I don't know how it is for Charlie now, obviously you've gone through the system and now you're seeing more of Derik, being in the Research House, I don't know if you've started to get closer to him."

Trevor: "Yes, I think there's naturally a line, if I'm going to spend more time with him, personal jokes are going to come up, but I think that relates to the fact that as you go along and the better he knows you, the more the banter

is going to develop and the personal side of it is going to come in because you know that person that much better. If I met someone on the street, I'm not going to give them personal banter, because it's just not appropriate, so the better you know a person the more personal that banter is going to be... because at the end of the day there is that power hierarchy there, because he is going to pick me to play. I want to play no matter what and he's the one who's picking me to play, so if I cross that line and become too close to him, or not too close – if I push the boundaries and upset him, then that's potentially going to affect me and my team selection.”

It is from this understanding that new light is shed upon the type of banter used and why it differs. It is through the development of personal relations that banter then can flourish and become personal. Where as newer players who have not yet explored their relations with the manager found it hard to use banter as a groundbreaker towards the coach. It is through Goffman's work where social rules of engagement are established, enforced, challenged and broken down to produce guidelines (Dennis & Martin, 2005). Banter is cut out of any situation that could affect the coach's decision as the power he held could change and alter any playing time for any player. Due to their shared goal of winning and playing together they therefore will not challenge this set of unwritten rules as much.

The final avenue to be explored was the approach of banter was how the coach's banter may differ along with the reasoning behind their form of discursive practice. Derik's clear non-attempt to end or stop discursive practices confirmed his existence within facilitating or initiating banter towards the players much like the study of Eveslage and Delany (1998). Similar to the players approach to banter, the coach used this discourse as an inclusive and sometimes initiative method of coaching;

Trevor: “There are different levels of banter, because it might not necessarily be – Derik will 100% banter Rodders, for sure, but will it be a put-down and an inclusive one where everyone's going to laugh at it and you understand that and you'll laugh at yourself as well; or will it be ‘Look at

him, he's fat!' or something like that. Nelson's an example; sometimes he'll get a put-down because of his weight, or something like that. But there are also examples where he might say about Rodney doing trampolining on the floor, which is ridiculous but very, very funny and that's banter in itself and it creates a laugh at everyone rather than one person maybe taking the brunt of it."

James: "Sometimes he'll make banter, like you say about you bouncing on the floor, so you then get the idea in your head and you go and do it and it picks everyone up. I don't know whether he does it on purpose, but sometimes if the mood's dead, he'll make a joke and you'll go and do something stupid because of it, and that lifts everyone. I think, again, it's goalkeepers who get poked fun at by him, he'll poke fun at us as a group, rather than as individuals, because he knows it'll bounce off all of us and then everyone has a chance to take the piss. Everyone will jump on that piece of banter and it will escalate."

Dean: "I definitely think he will poke fun more at the older boys, because he knows you a bit more personally. I think I have a little bit of banter with him but not as much as some of you might, especially, probably Charlie, because he's with him all the time, so you do have those more personal jokes. But for me and him, we don't have those personal jokes, just the odd little comment which it's funny we get along and that."

These statements reveal the coaches banter to be inclusive with the aim to increase cohesion and it is through his hierarchy that players will automatically buy into any discursive practice. The following field notes from training frame the statements above:

(Field note extract from training – Thursday 19th December 2013)

Derik: "You see these two balls here boys, imagine they are your misses tits! You would always look after them and always protect them! Well I want you to do the same with these on the pitch! Keepers don't you worry about two balls, you just concentrate on the one ball and top it form going in our net for once"

Ray: "Yeh you might get a clean sheet soon boys"

Similar to the findings of Eveslage and Delany (1998) the coach's use of banter was for a guide of motivation. It is this reference to "your missus tits" that was used to motivate players to take more care of the ball in future. Then the banter to follow was an inclusive put down, which upon observation, more than likely was

aimed at a group or strong willed individuals. Through understanding each individual the coach was able to adapt his banter to introduce putdowns to the team, this way they would all have a shared understanding and team ethos. Derik opened up this inclusive discussion through his banter, from which Ray was then able to 'jump on the wagon' and continue the inclusive taunting.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Conclusion

This study sought to explore the avenues of banter within the Tribain Men's University Football Club. This was to be achieved by exploring how banter plays a significant role within the development and maintenance of group cohesion, whilst noting the fluctuation of banter within the production of hierarchies. The literature of Currie (1991), Eveslage and Delany (1998), Parker (2001), Palmer (2011) and Clayton (2012) provided an assisting framework to present and interpret data based around the findings from observations and a focus group. The exploration into the analysis through this theoretical framework provided an insight into the phenomenon leading to the proposed research questions being answered.

It was very apparent through this study that banter contributed to group cohesion through the previous experiences of shared banter that was produced. The type of banter utilised consisted mostly of inclusive banter, which differed to other studies (Eveslage & Delany, 1998) but within this particular setting was produced to make players feel 'one of the lads' and part of the group identity. In order to become part of this identity a 'football lad', the players had to abide to certain criteria as if an unwritten rule was broken such players would receive banter. The team's identity consisted of dressing the same, having good physical features such as a good body and finally drinking alcohol though collective alcoholism. It was through the production of these individual and group identities that inclusive banter was able to flourish in order to set any unwritten rules and boundaries around the teams identity.

It is only when delving into the depths of why banter is used and what the consequence of it do we understand that its importance to the players remains within producing a social cohesive group. The overpowering concept of the teams constant social activity aimed to break down barriers and bring players closer to the group. It

was through this discourse of banter as an inclusive method that this was achieved. The breakdown of geographical measures within training games such as '5 asides' allowed banter to pick away at sub-groups such as 'the brummies' in order to create a cohesive competitive environment where they would feel part of one overall environment. It was within the inclusive section where forms of banter such as racism, would occur. This was only used for humour within the group, and could be considered ethically wrong. However, due to the socially constructed and constant relations between the players, they were able to use harsh racist comments with no detrimental outcome. Again it was through the events of alcoholism that banter was able to broaden at training to include the quieter newer players into the group by picking fun at any occurrences the night before. This way, players who were uneasy found it easier to interact with others as any social barriers had been broken down through banter.

When appraising banter's contribution and fluctuation within the production of hierarchies, this study opened up three main differences of banter. 'Peer-to-peer' banter was the communication between teammates where by the coaches were not present. The relationships that the players had built through previous experiences and relations had allowed harsher forms of banter to appear within the hierarchical roles of the teammates. The coach's social capital over all players would therefore affect the 'peer-to-coach' banter revealed or aimed at the coach. Many players would not offer personal banter towards the coach for two main reasons; personal relationships and the coach's power over any playing time. When banter could potentially affect any playing time personal banter would be absent. When exploring the hierarchy of the manager and how he used 'coach-to-peer' banter, it was understood that the form of banter produced was often to initiate inclusive and

motivational understanding. Through opening up inclusive and motivational banter to the players, they were then able to expand from that one piece to a group escalation of interaction and cohesion.

5.1 Practical implications and directions for future research

This study intended to reveal the importance of banter within the social construction of a University Men's football team and how the type of banter will fluctuate through hierarchies. This research suggests that through constant interaction and experiences such as nights out drinking, aid the production of discursive practices including banter. These practices will then work to break down any barriers between players whilst ensuring a more cohesive group.

Studies similar to this have focused only on the outcomes based around one sport, or based around the university setting (Eveslage & Delany, 1998; Parker, 2001). Therefore it would be cavalier to make sweeping generalisations based around the phenomenon of banter from the findings provided. While this study has given an insight into the men's university football team, future research could provide research into teams outside of a university setting as the constant interaction and nightlife of university students is inevitable. Also a forthcoming from this study was the groups 'football lad' identity and therefore another future avenue could explore a range of different sports in order to create a generalised assumption around the phenomena.

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APPENDIX A

A1. Focus Group Interview Guide

Prior to beginning this discussion I would just like to highlight the nature of this study. I will aim to draw upon your understandings and previous experiences that revolved around the discourse of banter in order to explore how banter helps form group solidarity and hierarchies within a sporting subculture. To begin however...

1.0 Can you discuss why it is that you play football?

Probe 1: How does the football environment different to other sports you have played?

Probe 2: How does playing this sport fit in with your current social lifestyle?

Probe 3: What is it that makes you want to continue playing this sport?

2.0 Ok, so now that you've highlighted why you play, how do you think your relationships between teammates formed in football?

Probe 1: Why might some relationships form faster and stronger than others?

Probe 2: Could you please discuss some examples of these situations of when interaction may or may not occur as much?

Probe 3: Are there certain things that you are able to say to some but not to others?

Probe 4: Why do you feel this is?

3.0 What sub-groups and hierarchies are formed within your football team through interaction?

Probe 1: What is the main type of interaction that takes place within the team?

Probe 2: How does it make you feel?

Probe 3: Does holding a hierarchy give you power over other players?

Probe 4: How do you think certain styles of interaction contribute to the production of sub groups and hierarchies?

4.0 Eathorpe (1990) understands banter to be the interrelationship involving humour and football can also be described as a masculinity exchange.

But what is your group understanding of 'banter'?

Probe 1: Discuss how and why is it used within your team?

Probe 2: When is it not used and why?

Probe 3: Does it make you feel like part of a group identity? If so, how?

Probe 4: What specific examples from your group involve banter to form subcultures?

Probe 5: Why do certain groups of players receive banter, and what is it used for?

Probe 6: How is feminism or masculinity enforced within training thorough banter?

Probe 7: Are there certain things you can say to each other in training that is deemed fine but then would not be outside of training? And why is this?

Probe 8: When is the line of banter crossed?

5.0 So now that you've highlighted your thoughts` on banter, how does alcoholism contribute to the use of banter within training?

Probe 1: When is this used? And why?

Probe 2: Does this allow for a more cohesive group?

Probe 3: How does this affect the players who did not contribute to alcoholism?

Probe 4: Can drinking related banter be used within training at all times?

6.0 Recognising that banter can change and that different types of banter is used, discuss how banter differs from peer to peer? Coach to peer? And Peer to Coach?

Probe 1: Why do you feel a coach might use banter towards players?

Probe 2 Does the coach banter certain players more so?

Probe 3: Why might he do this?

Probe 4: Are certain players able to banter the coach more so?

Probe 5: Why do you feel this is?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

I have read and fully understand the request to be a subject of Mr Josh Barnett's independent research study. I understand what I have to do and the risks involved. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that withdrawal is possible at anytime. Furthermore, I understand the measures that will be taken to uphold confidentiality as far as possible.

I agree to participate (Please circle)

Name.....

Contact Details.....

.....

.....

Contact Number.....

Contact E-mail address.....

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

Ethical status

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd
— UWC —

Date: 3th March 2014

To : Mr Joshua Jamie Barnett

Project reference number: (13/05/020U)

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of 29th May 2013.

Yours sincerely



Supervisor

Cardiff School of Sport
Cyncoed Campus, Cyncoed Road, Cardiff CF23 6AD UK
Tel: +44 (0)29 2041 6591 Fax: +44 (0)29 2041 6768
email: css@uwic.ac.uk www.cmu.ac.uk



Ysgol Chwasron Caerdydd
Campus Cyncoed, Heol Cyncoed, Caerdydd, CF23 6AD
Ffôn: +44 (0)29 2041 6591 Ffacs: +44 (0)29 2041 6768
e-bost: css@uwic.ac.uk www.cmu.ac.uk